

Washington begins drive to force Kurds back to Iraq



Kurdish refugees trying to flee war conditions and repression in Iraq. Washington refuses to open U.S. borders.

Barren transit camps are first step

BY SETH GALINSKY

Ignoring the desire of Kurds and other Iraqi refugees to flee Iraq, President George Bush instructed U.S. forces to begin building and patrolling temporary camps as a first step in forcing the refugees to return to their homes.

Lt. Gen. Martin Brandtner, operations director for the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that the enclave was being planned to get the refugees to move south from camp to camp until they are returned to the homes they fled.

Brandtner also stated that Washington hopes to set up camps all the way to Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, 60 miles from the Turkish border. The plan does not apply to refugees near the border with Iran.

U.S. officials have stressed they want the camps and the U.S. troop presence to be temporary. White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater referred to the camps as "relief stations" while the French government, which helped create the plan, called them "way stations" and "simple transit centers."

Washington says that the refugees are going to be "voluntarily" repatriated. But denied the right to leave Iraq and in the face of woefully inadequate relief efforts, the choice many face will be to starve in the mountains or risk entering the barren camps. The refugees have been fleeing massive repression by the Baghdad regime and the devastating conditions caused by the U.S. assault on Iraq.

Lt. Col. Paul Wisniewski, a logistics officer for the U.S. effort, said, "I've ordered 50,000 shovels so the people up there [in the mountains] can bury waste and do less desirable things — bury their dead."

"We hope to move people down from the Iraqi side of the mountains within a few days," said Les Cuny, a U.S. State Department consultant.

A battalion of 500 U.S. Marines in full combat gear took control April 20 of Zakho, an Iraqi city 10 miles from the new U.S. base at Silopi, Turkey, to prepare the way for the enclave. An estimated 10,000 U.S. troops, along with 1,800 British and 180 French soldiers, are expected to enter northern Iraq under the plan. Fourteen teams of U.S. Green Berets with helicopters and motorcycles began surveying sites inside Iraq April 17. According to the *New York Times* the Zakho camp will consist of 20-25 tent-cities, with 1,000 refugees each.

Only U.S. can set up enclave

On April 8, British Prime Minister John Major first proposed establishing "an enclave under UN protection." The French government supported, in essence, the British plan. But Bush was reluctant to back the proposal.

According to the *New York Times*, the White House was concerned that setting up the enclave would "fuel Kurdish separatism" and contribute to the "dismemberment" of Iraq.

Bush switched his position as his closest allies said the plan would be necessary to try and prevent the Kurdish refugee crisis

Deepen campaign against imperialism and war

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf can huff and puff all he wants about how "anybody that says this wasn't a victory doesn't know what they're talking about."

But no matter how many times the general repeats this and President George Bush insists that it will not be a "Vietnam-style quagmire," they cannot change what is clearer every day: the military "victory" has

EDITORIAL

left U.S. policy in the Middle East in a shambles. The lives of millions of refugees, who have been forced to flee into the mountains, are devastated.

As the U.S. rulers flip-flop over what to do next to salvage the situation, their posturing is exposed in front of millions. There is no stability, no end to the conflict between Palestinians fighting for freedom and the Israeli government, and no peace in the region in sight.

Those who consistently opposed this war and explained the aims of U.S. imperialism to their coworkers and others are participating in the growing discussion now taking place as a result of Washington's slaughters, and are getting a wide hearing. Millions of working people are seeing the face of U.S. imperialism in a new light as they become aware of the havoc wreaked on the Iraqi people. They are more open than ever to explanations from a working-class stand-

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Drive opens to win new readers for socialist press

BY RONI McCANN

Supporters of the *Militant* engaged in a campaign against imperialism and war will launch an international subscription drive April 27 to win 6,100 new readers for the socialist press.

The paper's supporters are putting the finishing touches on an enthusiastic plan for a seven-week drive to expand the readership of the only paper that tells the truth every week about the struggles of working people the world over: the *Militant*.

Winning new subscribers to the *Militant* newsweekly, which features coverage exposing and explaining Washington's war and continuing assault on the peoples of Iraq, is at the center of the circulation effort.

Every working person and youth can rely on the *Militant* to accurately and straightforwardly present the facts — often those that the employers, their government, and the big-business press choose not to tell — about the deepening crisis of the world imperialist system and the wars it breeds.

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Rail strikers are ordered back to work by Congress

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

The U.S. Congress acted swiftly April 17 to force railroad workers back to work, ending a strike against major freight carriers across the country.

The House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly, 400-5, and was followed by approval without dissent in the Senate to halt the 19-hour long strike. The emergency legislation was then signed by President George Bush.

Al Swift, a Democrat from Washington who heads a subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee that drafted the bill to end the strike, said he had "never seen an issue resolved with so little partisan politics."

The last contract covering rail workers was signed in 1985. It expired three years ago and rail owners have been pushing for massive concessions ever since. Last year, President Bush set up the Presidential Emergency Board to settle the dispute. Earlier this year, the board made nonbinding recommendations that included many concession demands that a majority of union members considered unacceptable. The final deadline for resolving the dispute was set for April 17, when rail workers could legally strike.

Under the Railway Labor Act, Congress can directly intervene to stop rail and airline strikes. Since 1963, Congress has intervened in at least 11 rail strikes.

In the weeks leading up to the deadline, solidarity rallies involving hundreds of unionists and supporters were held for rail workers in Wyoming, Nebraska, New York, Virginia, Illinois, Washington, and elsewhere.

On April 17, 235,000 members of eight rail unions struck freight carriers, including Burlington Northern, CSX, Chicago and North Western, and Norfolk Southern.

When 7:00 a.m. rolled around April 17, picket lines began to form in many cities. Few steps were taken by the rail unions' officialdom to prepare members for a strike. But in many areas, local union members began to take action to build support for their strike and explain the key issues to working people.

"Their morale was raised quite a bit just being able to walk the picket line and show the carriers they were willing to stand up for themselves," said Paul Swanson, a regional general chairman of the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way, based in Denver.

Rail unions in Chicago reproduced 75,000

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A book with facts on Washington's Mideast war

U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations is an irreplaceable tool in learning and getting out the truth about the brutal U.S. aggression against the Iraqi people. An introduction by Mary-Alice Waters reviews the systematic military buildup that preceded the war and the role played by Cuba at the United Nations.

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Help distribute this book by getting extra copies to sell to coworkers, classmates, and others. Special discounts are available for bulk orders. The book is also available in Spanish.

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North Korea is target of renewed threats

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

In the aftermath of Washington's war on Iraq, voices have been raised in imperialist circles in the United States posing renewed threats against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), North Korea.

"The next renegade state" was the description given to North Korea in a column by Leslie Gelb in the April 10 *New York Times*. Gelb said the DPRK was "the most dangerous country in the world," warning that it could become "the next Iraq."

Echoing the hue and cry raised against Iraq on the eve of the allied bombardment and invasion of that country, David Sanger, writing in the *New York Times* from Seoul, South Korea, warned that North Korea "may be only four or five years away from producing a crude but effective atomic bomb." Sanger described spy satellite pictures allegedly showing a reactor under construction which — when completed — "should produce" sufficient material to manufacture bombs, and a weapons-material production plant which "appears to be under construction." He also raised the bogey of Japan being "within Scud range" of North Korea.

North Korea is in fact a signatory to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and has long campaigned against nuclear weapons. Dozens of hostile nuclear warheads are aimed at this small country from U.S. bases in South Korea.

The DPRK refuses to allow inspection of its nuclear power plants while these weapons remain in South Korea.

Commando raid threatened

Just as these saber-rattling items were appearing in the U.S. media, the South Korean defense minister, Lee Jong Koo, publicly threatened to launch a commando raid against the North Korean reactor. The North Korean government responded that this was "virtually a declaration of war."

The Japanese government has added its weight to the campaign, stating that it will not provide any economic assistance to North Korea until Pyongyang assents to international inspection of its nuclear reactors. Moscow has chimed in, threatening withdrawal of assistance for the nuclear facility if inspection is not agreed to.

The *New York Times*, in an April 17 editorial, raised a word of caution in the face of the scare campaign. Quoting Richard Solomon, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern and Pacific Affairs — "I can say without reservation that we pose no nuclear threat to North Korea" — the editorial commented, "But the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons on South Korean soil speaks louder than words." The *Times* went on to suggest withdrawal of "a few" nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula so as to gauge Pyongyang's reaction.

Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes responded to this campaign in a message addressed to the Workers' Party

of Korea and to the government and people of the DPRK on the occasion of North Korean President Kim Il Sung's birthday.

Barnes wrote, "We strongly condemn the escalation of threats and provocations against your government by the administration of President George Bush.

"Reflecting the imperial arrogance of the tiny handful of super-rich families who run the United States, dismissed out-of-hand is the DPRK's reasonable and long-standing position that it welcomes inspection by the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency as soon as Washington and Seoul are ready to do the same," he said.

"According to the morality of the imperialists," Barnes continued, "Washington alone has the right to unlimited stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons — as well as the right to decide who else may or may

not develop those same weapons!

"These charges and threats against Pyongyang occur as Washington and Seoul are engaging in their annual joint military maneuvers, dubbed 'Team Spirit '91.' These massive war games include a mock invasion of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," he went on.

"Washington charges that your government threatens the 'stability' of eastern Asia. This is false," Barnes stated. "The threat to imperialist-imposed 'stability' in the region is the refusal of the toilers to passively accept the unemployment, crushing poverty, hunger, disease, and human degradation bred by imperialism. And it is Washington, not the DPRK, which has thousands of troops, armed with nuclear weapons, dominating the land, air, and sea of the southern part of the Korean peninsula."



Freedom of speech victory in North Carolina

"The need to discuss and debate government policy is more important than ever."

BY ROBERT DEES

RALEIGH, North Carolina — Raleigh city officials dropped their charges April 9 against two members of the Socialist Workers Party for setting up an election campaign literature table without a permit. This was a day before the activists were to appear in district court, facing possible convictions that could have resulted in a 30-day jail term and a \$50 fine.

In February, the two activists staffed a literature table here, campaigning for Socialist Worker Party candidates, when two city policemen demanded to see a permit and ordered the table taken down.

The activists explained to the police that their election campaigning was protected by First Amendment freedom of speech and freedom of the press rights. Officer Keith then told Tony Prince, one of the campaigners, "If there's anything I hate, it's a smart ass," and issued two citations.

Upon hearing of this harassment, Socialist Workers Party campaign supporters sent petitions to Raleigh Mayor Avery Upchurch protesting the unconstitutionality of the police action. Petitions came from across the state, and included statements of support from Bill Schenck, retired International Association of Machinists Grand Lodge representative from Clemmons, and Sidney Young, co-manager of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Bi-County Joint Board from Eden.

Young wrote, "The right to distribute lit-

erature and educational materials, to campaign for public office, and to engage in political discussions is protected by the constitution under the First Amendment.

"It is particularly important to defend these rights now, when the need to freely discuss and debate government policy is more important than ever."

The two SWP members were ordered to appear in court March 20 on criminal misdemeanor charges. When the police arrived at the hearing to press charges, they had already seen the protest petitions.

At the hearing, the Raleigh policemen said they would drop the charge of not having a "peddlers" permit if campaign supporters would agree to obtain an "encroachment" permit. That permit costs \$50 and requires insurance to build on city sidewalks.

The statute reads, in part, "upon construction of the encroachment the user shall submit to the city as built drawings showing the precise location of the encroachment."

The permit application must be approved by the city's planning, community development, transportation, inspections, engineering, public utilities, and public works officials. To meet the insurance coverage requirement would cost at least \$2,500 a year.

When supporters attempted to get the permit, Gloria Sessoms of the public works department, responsible for issuing this permit, insisted that it did not apply to literature tables.

The two Socialist Workers Party members were subsequently ordered to appear in court again April 10, as city attorney Tom McCormick continued to prosecute the case.

When charges were dropped April 9, it was clearly due to the pressure that campaign supporters had mounted through their diligent efforts to expose the attack on democratic rights. SWP Greensboro City Council candidate Naomi Craine

called the victory "a big step forward for freedom of speech. It helps open up the political space needed by workers to discuss the important interests, needs, and concerns of all working people today."

New Jersey socialist candidates triple ballot requirement

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

NEWARK, New Jersey — In two weeks, supporters of Socialist Workers Party candidates for state office here gathered more than 1,000 signatures — triple the requirement for ballot status.

The SWP candidates are Rachel Knapik, a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union, who is running for State Senate in the 28th district; Al Duncan, a longtime union and Black rights activist, and Karen Kopperud, a member of the United Transportation Union, running for State Assembly in the 28th district; and Don Mackle, a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and Jason Redrup, Newark Young Socialist Alliance chairperson, running for State Assembly in the 29th district.

In the course of the petitioning drive the socialists circulated the *Militant* and its April supplement, the *International Socialist Review*, which contains the United Nations report on the U.S.-led devastation of Iraq. Fifty-four copies were sold in the course of the ballot effort.

The candidates and their supporters have participated in protests against police brutality in Plainfield and Teaneck, New Jersey, and walked the picket lines in support of rail workers fighting for a decent contract.



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New Zealand protests hit antilabor bill pushed by government

BY MIKE BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Chanting "1, 2, 3, 4 — Kick the bill out the door!" 5,000 unionists marched through Auckland April 10 to protest the Employment Contract Bill, a draft law that radically attacks unions' legal rights.

The march was one of a series of actions by workers in response to a call for a national week of action April 3-10 by the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (CTU), the national union federation.

CTU President Ken Douglas said that a quarter of a million people had attended meetings, rallies, and demonstrations against the bill during the week. "It is unprecedented in New Zealand history for a new government to antagonize the great majority of the population so quickly," he said.

Since its October 1990 electoral landslide over the incumbent Labour Party, the National Party government has opened a new stage in the employers' drive to overcome prolonged economic stagnation and reverse declining profit rates at the expense of the incomes and living conditions of working people. This involves a two-pronged attack.

First, the government froze old-age pensions and cut unemployment, sickness, and other government-funded benefits by up to 25 percent starting April 1, slashing government spending by more than \$US600 million.

Secondly, the government introduced the Employment Contracts Bill, due to become law May 1, which radically reduces the

gally recognized powers of the trade unions.

For over 50 years unions have had the right to represent all workers in a given industry, trade, or occupation. In most cases, workers were also legally required to join the union having jurisdiction. Their dues were deducted by their employer in the same way as government income tax is deducted.

The results of negotiations between unions and employers were codified in "awards" registered in special labor courts, and, together with legislated conditions like the 40-hour workweek and adult minimum wage, established the minimum wages and conditions applicable to that industry or occupation. The right to strike was restricted, with most disputes being channeled through the labor courts.

The new bill retains the restrictions on the right to strike while removing most legal protection of union coverage and working conditions. Unions lose their right to automatically sign up workers in a given industry or occupation. National awards are abolished, to be replaced by individual contracts between a worker and the employer.

It is proposed that where groups of workers nominate a "bargaining agent" such as a union, the agent can attempt to negotiate a collective contract with the workers' employers on their behalf. If successful, the new collective contract would apply only to those workers who nominated the bargaining agent, and not to the industry or workplace as a whole.

Closed shops would be outlawed. The 40-hour, five-day week would be removed from



April 30 march in Auckland called by Public Service Association, with high school students in foreground.

labor law and become conditional on agreement by an employer during contract negotiations.

What employers hope to gain from these changes was captured in a statement submitted by the chief executive of the building industry Contractors' Federation to the parliamentary select committee considering the bill: "Labourers would be able to start work at 6 a.m., stop working when it started raining, and come back when the rain stopped until the job was done," he said. They would have to work nights and weekends without overtime rates to make up their 40 hours.

Government ministers openly explain that the measures are aimed at lowering wages and drastically cutting government social spending. The effects of the attacks are compounded by a deep economic recession that has seen joblessness climb to more than 14 percent.

For those workers not currently employed, the New Zealand government pays benefits such as unemployment, pensions, disability, and sickness benefits. The government is complaining that these payments have risen in proportion to the average wage in the last decade.

This has not come about by upward pressure on these benefits, however, but by downward pressure on wages. Since 1982, for example, real wages have fallen by 30 percent, according to official government statistics, while for much of the same period government-paid benefits were tied to the cost-of-living index.

Given the depth of the economic crisis, hundreds of thousands of workers and their dependents have been forced to rely on benefits for their survival. Today, government figures show that one quarter of all families and one third of the entire population are dependent on government welfare benefits or pensions. Among Maoris, the indigenous population of New Zealand, the figure is 40 percent.

CTU leaders accuse the government of reintroducing "chaos" into labor relations. Mark Gosche, secretary of the Northern Hotel Workers Union, told the *New Zealand Herald*: "They have set up a system where very low-paid workers will be competing for jobs with starving beneficiaries."

The April 10 march was called by the Public Service Association (PSA) and many workers carried PSA placards saying simply "Yes to Unions." They were joined by Timber, Pulp and Paper Workers Union members on a national 24-hour strike against the bill, Harbour Board workers, municipal government employees, journalists, banking and insurance workers, and seafarers. High school students from Auckland Girls Grammar also joined in.

The Seafarers Union's 1,100 members had begun a nationwide strike that day, following the breakdown of their national awards talks. The union accuses the employers of trying to delay settlement of the awards until the new law goes into effect May 1, in order to force new concessions from the union. In particular, the bosses hope to use the new law to force an end to the national register of seafarers, a roster system for employment administered by the union.

The seafarers also adopted resolutions calling for a general strike against the new law.

Stuart Shaw from Christchurch and Terry Lynch from Wellington contributed to this article.

Inaugural issue of Marxist magazine in Spanish to come off press in June

BY JAMES HARRIS

Nueva Internacional, a new Spanish-language Marxist magazine, will publish its inaugural issue in June. The launching of the magazine marks a major expansion of the communist literature in Spanish that is available to working people.

"We have seen a growing interest among Spanish-speaking workers, farmers, and youth in learning about Marxism so they can better understand the world we live in and apply the lessons of the working class experience to their own struggles. It is these fighters who will be the base of our readership," said Luis Madrid. Madrid is the editor of *Nueva Internacional* and also the editor of the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*.

To make the publishing plans possible, Selva Nebbia, previously a member of the *Militant* staff, is now working full time on *Nueva Internacional* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Nebbia came onto the *Militant* staff in May 1989, having been the editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* prior to that. She has traveled for the *Militant* to Panama, to cover the aftermath of the U.S. invasion, to El Salvador, and to

Namibia to cover the elections in November 1989.

"*Nueva Internacional*'s audience will include garment workers, auto workers, and farm workers — from the United States to Canada to Sweden — and fighters in Central America, the Caribbean and the rest of Latin America," Madrid explained.

"Our first issue will carry in Spanish articles appearing in the upcoming English-language *New International* no. 7," Madrid reported. The lead article in no. 7 is "Opening Guns of World War III," based on speeches given by Jack Barnes, Socialist Workers Party national secretary, on the war against the Iraqi people and its aftermath.

Madrid said other articles in *Nueva Internacional* no. 1 will take up lessons drawn by the communist movement during previous wars. One section takes up the need for a communist policy in wartime as well as peacetime. The final section contains documents on the class-struggle approach Iranian communists took during the Iran-Iraq war.

Issue no. 2 of *Nueva Internacional* will carry the articles that appear in *New International* no. 8, titled "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the road to socialism." These articles discuss

Guevara's contribution to the struggle for socialism after capitalist property relations were overturned in Cuba. They include: "Che's proletarian legacy and Cuba's rectification process," by Mary-Alice Waters, "Che's contribution to the Cuban economy," by Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, "The creativity of Che's economic thought," by Carlos Tablada, and "The politics of economics: Che Guevara and Marxist continuity," by Steve Clark and Jack Barnes.

Madrid said that a third issue of *Nueva Internacional* will print major political resolutions of the Socialist Workers Party, adopted at its 1988 and 1990 conventions.

The Pathfinder publishing house has decided to print new, expanded editions of two of its best selling Spanish-language titles, *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X Speaks) and *El Socialismo y el Hombre* (Socialism and Man) by Che Guevara. Both are out of print.

"Many of the important works in the arsenal of communist literature, including some Marxist classics, are simply not available in Spanish," Madrid noted. "This makes these publishing projects central to the forging of a working-class leadership among those whose first language is Spanish."

"This is an ambitious project," he continued. "It will take a great deal of work."

"A sign of the response we are getting is the range of supporters who have volunteered enthusiastically to help with the translation," Madrid said. "We have a team of 13 volunteers who are working now on sections of *Nueva Internacional*. They include a garment worker, two steelworkers, an auto worker, a secretary, a biologist, two interpreters, and others. We are still looking for more volunteers."

"Those who wish to help out in our Spanish-language publishing effort can also make a contribution to the New International Fund," said Madrid. The fund has a goal of raising \$75,000 by June 1 to make possible the publishing of *New International*, *Nueva Internacional*, and the French-language *Nouvelle Internationale*.

"In June we will celebrate the final collection of the fund and the first issue of *Nueva Internacional*," said Madrid. "It will mark an important step forward for revolutionaries on a world scale."



Militant/Selva Nebbia



Militant/Arthur Hughes

Luis Madrid (left) is editor of *Nueva Internacional* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. Former *Militant* staff writer Selva Nebbia (right) is now working full-time on the two publications, as publishing project in Spanish expands.

To our readers

The *Militant* will suspend publication for one week so our staff can work on a reorganization project. The staffs of the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial* and Pathfinder publishers, whose offices are in the same building, will be working on similar projects.

The *Militant*'s photograph files, periodicals, and newspaper clippings will be reorganized and pruned so we can be in the best possible shape to keep bringing you news and analysis on the devastation produced by the U.S.-led war in the Mideast and on employer attacks on working people at home.

The next issue of the *Militant* will be published on Tuesday, May 7.

Congress orders rail workers back to work

Continued from front page

fliers to distribute to commuters to explain the safety, wage, and benefit issues posed. While many commuter lines operated as usual during the one-day strike, including those in the Chicago area, a few lines were affected because they share tracks with freight railroads.

At the Santa Fe yard in Richmond, California, Teamsters who work for Piggyback Services walked off the job the moment the picketline was formed. Piggyback, the company that loads and unloads truck vans from railroad flatcars, was struck by Teamsters last year. Members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) honored their picket lines, and within three days the Teamsters won their fight.

When rail strikers' picket lines went up April 17, unionists in several areas reported a sympathetic response from working people. In Seattle, one rail worker described the response of passers-by this way: "If they wear a suit and tie they don't even look over, but if they're workers it's honking horns and thumbs up all the way."

"There was a lot of support up in Sheridan, Wyoming, where mine workers union members walked the picket lines with us," Swanson reported.

The eleventh-hour congressional legislation immediately imposed some concessions on rail workers recommended by the Presidential Emergency Board.

Under the new provisions, rail workers will begin paying 15 percent of their health-care costs. Previously, these costs were covered by the employers except for \$100 deductible.

Workers will receive a three percent wage increase in July, not nearly enough to keep up with inflation. Rail workers' wages have been frozen since 1988, when negotiations for a new contract first opened up.

In addition to imposing concessions and halting the strike, Congress also voted to create a new board, which will take up unresolved issues. The mediation board will have 65 days to settle the contract dispute and is empowered to impose binding decisions.

Rail workers cannot legally walk out again to win a better contract. Union members will not be able to discuss or vote on their contract.

The rail bosses are demanding changes in work rules, which would increase the safety hazards already associated with the rail industry and lead to further job loss.

Specifically, the carriers have sought to more than double the number of miles rail workers must travel in order to be paid a full day's wage.

Management has demanded a reduction in the number of workers on each train crew. In the past, most train crews have had five workers assigned — an engineer, fireman, conductor, brakeman, and flagman. But the employers have proposed the crews be reduced. Many railroads have already negotiated "crew consist" agreements lowering crew sizes to as little as two or three people.

Both the employers and the government had campaigned to undermine solidarity for the rail unionists, charging that they would

be guilty of exacerbating the economic recession if they went on strike.

"It's a serious concern to an economy that's in recession," said Michael Boskin, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

"If it lasts only two or three days, the rail strike won't disrupt much," said James Bartley, president of the National Industrial Transportation League, a shipping group in Washington. "But if it extends beyond that, the strike would really start to cripple the nation's supply line."

U.S. railroads carry 37 percent of all freight, including coal, grain, automobile parts, and many other goods.

The employers attempted to sow prejudice and pit the rail workers against other working people.

Auto makers threatened layoffs of hundreds of thousands of workers. The Chevron Corp. said its chemical and oil operations would face some closings if the strike lasted more than six days.

Some 38 percent of coal is shipped by rail, and many coal operators threatened shut-downs in the industry.

Drive opens to win new readers to socialist press

Continued from front page

Throughout the seven-month imperialist war against the Iraqi people and continuing today, the *Militant* has stood unconditionally in defense of the toilers in the Mideast, reporting on the devastation in Baghdad, southern Iraq, and on the borders where millions of Kurdish people were forced to flee. Since the end of the slaughter wrought by U.S.-led forces, the *Militant* has refused to let Washington off the hook.

It is for these reasons that supporters of the paper have embarked on a concentrated drive to win new readers to the paper and other socialist publications, making their efforts the centerpiece of the working-class campaign against imperialism and war.

The goal is to sign up 3,225 new subscribers to the *Militant*, 725 readers to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 200 to the French-language quarterly *L'internationaliste*. Supporters will also promote two new issues of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, aiming to sell 1,950 copies by June 15, the end of the drive.

Socialist workers active in 10 industrial unions have decided to adopt goals to win new readers among fellow unionists and working-class fighters, GIs, and youth.

Through the brutal U.S.-led war against Iraq, *Militant* supporters active in the unions gained a deeper understanding of the value of the communist press today and the opportunities for circulating it widely among workers and young people, who are increasingly receptive to their ideas.

Next week the *Militant* will feature a score-board with the goals taken by socialist workers active in industrial unions in eight countries.

From Phoenix, Arizona, to Stockholm, Sweden, *Militant* supporters are making plans to kick off the circulation drive with a big

Defending the House and Senate action to end the strike, Sen. Edward Kennedy explained, "This accord is good for labor, good for the economy, and good for the nation, and I look forward to its implementation."

Some rail union officials argued that the action by Congress gives another chance for rail workers to secure a better contract from management. Fred Hardin, president of the UTU, said he was "well satisfied" and happy "to get another chance to try."

During the U.S.-led war against the Iraqi people, top rail union officials pledged that their unions would not go on strike. "As a patriotic gesture, we're not going to strike and disrupt the war effort," Dick Kilroy, president of the 80,000-member Transport Communications Union, said. He urged rail workers to accept the contract recommendations made by the Presidential Emergency Board.

Others characterized the congressional legislation as a defeat for rail workers.

"We came out of this very defeated, much worse than we anticipated," said Mac Fleming, president of the Brotherhood of Maintenance

of Way Employees.

Many rail workers were angered at having been forced to return to work and saw the action by Congress as an attack on their unions.

"They don't care about hungry children in America or hungry children in Iraq, but they will wake up Bush in the middle of the night to force us back to work," said Jim Hegedus, local chairman of UTU Local 225 in Cleveland.

Paul Swanson said many members of his union had voiced "disgust and disappointment. A typical reaction is if all we can muster is five votes in Washington, then we must be spending an awful lot of money in lobbying efforts for no good. A typical reaction is similar to that of my own. With friends of labor like that, we don't need any enemies."

Dana Burroughs, a member of UTU Local 620 in Chicago; Tamar Rosenfeld, a member of UTU Local 1730 in Richmond, CA; Scott Ware, a member of UTU Local 225 in Cleveland; Jeff Ford in Seattle; and Bob Robertson in Chicago contributed to this article.

Los Angeles team signs up readers

BY RAÚL GONZÁLEZ

LOS ANGELES — A two-week team of *Militant* supporters from around the country is working to win new subscribers to the socialist newsweekly among working people and youth here.

The team has scheduled a lively itinerary of activities to maximize discussions on the U.S.-led war against the Iraqi people, and the sharpening economic crisis of capitalism.

During its stay, the team will participate in the ongoing battle to oust Daryl Gates from his position as Los Angeles police chief. The recent beating of Rodney King by police has deepened political debate here and the team is joining in this important discussion.

On the team's first day, it visited three rail yards in the area and one in Colton, California.

That same day the team set up a "Join the YSA" table at California State University at Los Angeles, where more than \$60 in Pathfinder literature and a subscription to the *Militant* were sold.

On April 17 the team traveled to Barstow and Yermo to talk with rail workers during their 19-hour strike that day. "I'm glad you 'guys came out here,'" one rail worker said. "It's good to see a newspaper telling the truth."

"It's easy to see how important bringing the *Militant* to these workers is," said Jimi Bower, a team participant and member of the Young Socialist Alliance from Salt Lake City. "They're facing the rail bosses and Congress, and it's hard to figure out what to do. The *Militant* helps."

Through the next few days the team visited two other college campuses in Los Angeles and a high school.

During a plant-gate sale to members of the United Auto Workers who are in a contract dispute with McDonnell Douglas in Long Beach, 24 workers bought copies of the *Militant* and one requested more information on the YSA.

Marina Sitrin, a YSA member from New York, who also participated in the team, reported she had found special interest in light of the King beating in the case of jailed unionist Mark Curtis, who was also assaulted and framed by the cops in Iowa.

John Evenhuis, a leader of the YSA here, reported that the Los Angeles chapter is working with the team to organize public meetings at college campuses during the team's visit.

SALES DRIVE GOALS

Areas	The <i>Militant</i>			Perspectiva Mundial		New Int'l*		L'int.*		Total	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
UNITED STATES											
Atlanta	70	0	0%	10	0	55	0	2	0	137	0
Austin, Minn.	50	0	0%	10	0	20	0	2	0	82	0
Baltimore	66	0	0%	10	0	31	0	3	0	110	0
Birmingham, Ala.	85	0	0%	8	0	43	0	2	0	138	0
Boston	100	0	0%	25	0	50	0	10	0	185	0
Charleston, WV	60	0	0%	5	0	30	0	2	0	97	0
Chicago	130	0	0%	30	0	70	0	5	0	235	0
Cleveland	85	0	0%	10	0	33	0	2	0	130	0
Des Moines, Iowa	98	0	0%	15	0	35	0	2	0	150	0
Detroit	80	0	0%	8	0	40	0	2	0	130	0
Greensboro, NC	50	0	0%	10	0	34	0	2	0	96	0
Houston	65	0	0%	20	0	35	0	2	0	122	0
Los Angeles	150	0	0%	80	0	124	0	3	0	357	0
Miami	67	0	0%	25	0	45	0	15	0	152	0
Morgantown, WV	65	0	0%	5	0	40	0	2	0	112	0
New York	200	0	0%	75	0	150	0	15	0	440	0
Newark, NJ	110	0	0%	40	0	140	0	10	0	300	0
Omaha, Neb.	65	0	0%	10	0	18	0	2	0	95	0
Philadelphia	60	0	0%	21	0	56	0	2	0	139	0
Phoenix	30	0	0%	10	0	20	0	1	0	61	0
Pittsburgh	75	0	0%	3	0	40	0	2	0	120	0
Price, Utah	50	0	0%	9	0	14	0	2	0	75	0
Salt Lake City	105	0	0%	18	0	50	0	2	0	175	0
San Francisco	135	0	0%	70	0	110	0	5	0	320	0
Seattle	89	0	0%	33	0	45	0	3	0	170	0
St. Louis	100	0	0%	5	0	48	0	2	0	155	0
Twin Cities, Minn.	115	0	0%	15	0	53	0	2	0	185	0
Washington, DC	80	0	0%	13	0	50	0	2	0	145	0
Albany, N.Y.	15	0	0%	2	0	10	0	0	0	27	0
U.S. TOTAL	2,450	0	0%	595	0	1,489	0	106	0	4,640	0
AUSTRALIA											
BRITAIN											
London	100	0	0%	15	0	90	0	5	0	210	0
Manchester	50	0	0%	5	0	45	0	2	0	102	0
Sheffield	50	0	0%	3	0	75	0	2	0	130	0
BRITAIN TOTAL	200	0	0%	23	0	210	0	9	0	442	0
CANADA											
Montréal	75	0	0%	15	0	50	0	35	0	175	0
Toronto	80	0	0%	30	0	50	0	5	0	165	0
Vancouver	65	0	0%	15	0	40	0	5	0	125	0
CANADA TOTAL	220	0	0%	60	0	140	0	45	0	465	0
FRANCE											
	5	0	0%	5	0	5	0	15	0	30	0
ICELAND											
	30	0	0%	1	0	12	0	1	0	44	0
NEW ZEALAND											
Auckland	40	0	0%	3	0	40	0	1	0	84	0
Christchurch	38	0	0%	1	0	30	0	1	0	70	0
Wellington	38	0	0%	1	0	30	0	1	0	70	0
N. Z. TOTAL	116	0	0%	5	0	100	0	3	0	224	0
SWEDEN											
	35	0	0%	20	0	15	0	3	0	73	0
TOTAL	3,076	0	0%	713	0	1,996	0	183	0	5,968	0
DRIVE GOALS	3,225	0%		725		1,950		200		6,100	

* Single copies of *New Internationalist*; subscriptions to *L'internationaliste*

Socialists in unions deepen working-class campaign against imperialism and war

BY RONI McCANN
AND SETH GALINSKY

Socialist workers active in 10 industrial trade unions held meetings over the past several weeks to discuss the next steps in advancing a working-class campaign against imperialism and war.

Building on the momentum they gained through the course of the U.S.-led war on Iraq, the socialists decided to step up efforts to deepen understanding of and opposition to Washington's brutal and continued assault on the peoples of the region by reaching out to coworkers and fellow unionists; GLs, veterans, and reservists; and young people on college and high school campuses.

They discussed the greater opportunities today to carry out this campaign in defense of the toilers in Iraq and to raise the demands that the inhumane sanctions be lifted; that all foreign troops withdraw from Iraq; and that the U.S. borders be opened to the Kurdish people who are bearing the brunt of the effects of imperialism's war.

At the weekends of events the socialist workers discussed and adopted two political reports, elected leaderships, and participated in forums that featured talks by Socialist Workers Party leaders on "The Opening Guns of World War III." The meetings raised money for publishing new issues of the Marxist magazine *New International* along with the Spanish-language *Nueva Internacional* and the French-language *Nouvelle Internationale*.

The communist workers are active in the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU); International Association of Machinists (IAM); International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU); International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE); Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW); United Auto Workers (UAW); United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW); United Mine Workers of America (UMWA); United Steelworkers of America (USWA); and the United Transportation Union (UTU).

Crisis of imperialist system deepens

In a report to members of the OCAW meeting in Houston, Joel Britton explained that the U.S.-led war against Iraq, far from helping U.S. imperialism solve the crises of the world capitalist system, further accelerated the contradictions and trends that drove the imperialist rulers to war in the first place.

Britton is a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee and an operator at the Chevron refinery in Los Angeles organized by OCAW Local 1-547.

With each passing day, the touted "victory" by Washington in the Mideast turns into more of an utter fiasco for the ruling class, as the goal of securing a government in Baghdad that will protect U.S. interests slides further out of reach.

"The U.S.-led war against Iraq is an attempt by Washington to use its military might to stave off the decaying old capitalist world order," said Britton. "What lies ahead are more wars with even more devastating consequences for working people the world over."

As the capitalist crisis deepens, working people will be drawn into battles to defend their unions, rights, and standard of living, explained Britton. Through these struggles, the toilers of the world will get their chance to forge the kind of leadership and gain the confidence and experience they need to fight effectively and ultimately replace the crumbling capitalist order.

Within this framework Britton focused his report on the state of the U.S. labor movement and the opportunities to build a party of communist workers today.

Labor movement continues to retreat

The SWP leader explained that a more than 10-year offensive has been waged by the employers as a result of a long-term economic crisis and sharpening inter-imperialist competition. To fundamentally alter this trend and lay the basis for a sustained period of capitalist expansion and social and political stability, the employers must deepen their attacks against working people.

The capitalists must take on and try to defeat the mass organizations of the working



Food being distributed to Kurdish refugees on Turkish-Iraqi border. Socialist workers in unions discussed greater opportunities to win support for demand that U.S. borders be opened to war victims.

class. This is the only way to alter the relationship between capital and labor.

"Despite the blows dealt to the labor movement the capitalist rulers haven't accomplished this fundamental goal," said Britton. "As a result, the U.S. labor movement remains at the center stage of politics today."

"We say this because it is the industrial working class that is at the center of the rulers' target and at the center of resistance to their moves," said Britton. Compared to recent decades, political developments in the world intersect more immediately with the labor movement and get reflected more rapidly in the ranks of the unions.

The fact that the U.S. labor movement remains at center stage, however, does not mean the U.S. labor movement is on the offensive, he stated.

"The labor struggles that have taken place over the recent period, including during the U.S.-led war against Iraq, occurred within the framework of the continuing retreat by the labor movement as a whole in the face of the bosses' attacks," he said.

While the all-out rout of the unions by the employers was broken in the mid-1980s by struggles of coal miners, meatpackers, and others, said Britton, the labor movement continues to retreat in the face of the employers' offensive.

Class collaboration of union officials

"The labor officialdom has deepened its collaboration with the employing class and remains fixated on narrow concerns aimed at maintaining their shrinking dues base," Britton said. "They continue to try to promote and deepen working-class identification with 'our' company, 'our' industry, 'our' government."

"This is captured by the two top legislative priorities the AFL-CIO has laid out for the next period," the SWP leader said.

One campaign focuses on opposition to a trade pact between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. "Under the guise of protecting Mexican workers," Britton explained, "the officialdom opposes the rulers' moves aimed at getting rid of trade restrictions."

"The labor bureaucrats use the horrific working conditions and standard of living of workers in Mexico to push their reactionary protectionist ideas. Their course has nothing to do with international solidarity within the working class."

It goes in the opposite direction of a common struggle of working people in all three countries against their employers and their government. The officials promote the idea that Mexican workers are a threat to workers in the United States. A similar argument was used decades ago by the labor bureaucracy against workers in the open-shop South.

The union officialdom is also pushing antisab legislation. "In itself we are not opposed to laws such as this," said Britton. "But the idea that a piece of paper adopted

in Washington will guarantee that the bosses refrain from using scab labor to break our strike struggles is typical of the illusions they promote."

The only way to deal with the important question of the use of strikebreakers is for workers to begin to see the need and the potential for shutting down production during their strikes, said Britton. This is a necessary component in waging a successful strike that not only weakens the boss but strengthens the union.

Unions under attack

In a report to socialist workers who are members of the ILGWU, Margaret Jayko, a laid-off sewing machine operator in San Francisco, noted that the union's membership has fallen drastically since 1975 — from about 375,000 members to 175,000 today.

"A significant percentage of garment workers in the United States work in hellish sweatshops. In San Francisco the state labor commission recently conducted a sweep of more than 200 sweatshops, most of them in

Chinatown and the heavily Latino Mission District," Jayko said. Officials cited 60 of the factories for failure to pay minimum wages, overtime, and workers' compensation, along with having unsanitary working conditions and using child labor.

The ILGWU officials complain that the largely immigrant character of the workforce — much of which is undocumented and vulnerable to deportation threats — makes organizing too difficult. "The campaign by the labor officials against the U.S.-Canada-Mexico free-trade agreement points the finger at the wrong culprit," said Jayko. "It's the U.S. garment bosses who are driving down our wages and working conditions and laying us off."

Union rail workers who are members of the SWP met in Atlanta. A good part of their discussion centered on the impending national rail strike which occurred just days later. The socialist UTU members decided to use the heightened political discussions taking place among rail workers around the strike to introduce a broader layer of coworkers to the *Militant*, *International Socialist Review* supplement, upcoming issues of *New International*, and Pathfinder's newly published book *The Eastern Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists*.

Importance of Eastern, Daily News

"Even in this period, with this kind of retreat and misleadership, the fact that workers dug in their heels, refused to give in, and decided to fight against Eastern Airlines, the New York *Daily News*, Pittston Coal, and others is important," Britton told OCAW members meeting in Houston. "It shows there is a growing spirit of resistance among workers today."

Britton explained that the bosses were not necessarily happy with the settlements in these fights. He pointed to the example of the *Daily News* where workers put up a struggle, fought longer than the employers expected, and despite the loss of many jobs and other concessions were able to stop the destruction of their unions at the *News*.

Britton explained that the Eastern Airlines strikers scored an important victory over union-busting at one of the largest airlines in the world.

The Eastern strikers had decided by the time they walked out on March 4, 1989, that the only chance they had was to fight.

Continued on Page 6

Books for Working-Class Campaign against Imperialism and War

Pathfinder publishes a number of books and pamphlets that are valuable weapons for working people opposed to imperialism and war. These Pathfinder titles document earlier opposition to imperialism and war, and assaults on the unions and democratic rights at home since the 1930s.

Also from Pathfinder

Fighting Racism in World War II* by C.L.R. James and others, 376 pp., \$19.95

Socialism and Man in Cuba by Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, 44 pp., \$2.50

Malcolm X: The Last Speeches 189 pp., \$15.95

*These books are among eight titles related to the working class struggle against imperialism and war offered at a 25 percent discount to members of the Pathfinder Readers Club during April and May.

Club members obtain a 15 percent discount on all Pathfinder books and pamphlets. Join the Readers Club for \$10 (\$5) a year.

Available from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12. Or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please include \$3 per book, \$.50 each additional book, for postage and handling.



Malcolm X Talks to Young People
Speeches in the U.S., Britain and Africa, 110 pp., \$9.95



Out Now!*
A Participant's Account of the Movement in the U.S. against the Vietnam War, by Fred Halstead 759 pp., \$29.95



Teamster Bureaucracy*
The Trade Union Campaign against World War II, by Farrell Dobbs, 304 pp., \$17.95



The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*
The Proletarian Party and the Trade Unions, by Jack Barnes, 346 pp., \$18.95

Socialists map plans for campaign against war and imperialism

Continued from Page 5

"Victories were won in the course of the battle. A big union-buster, and later, the government trustee appointed to run Eastern, were brought down," said Britton.

"While the strike didn't strengthen the Machinists union itself — thousands of union jobs were lost — it made many bosses think twice before launching other union-busting drives."

Britton urged every socialist worker to read and study *The Eastern Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists* book.

How strikes are viewed today

"Because of the years of corrupt collaboration with the employing class on the part of the union misleadership," Britton said, "the idea that a strike is a tactic to be used to shut down production — thus withholding your labor power, which is the source of the bosses' profits, and improving your position vis-à-vis the employer — is not widely held."

Today many people equate strikes with scabs successfully taking strikers' jobs. After a long, hard-fought struggle, some of the strikers might get their jobs back.

"Union officials today often threaten workers with strikes instead of leading such battles aimed at both weakening the employer and strengthening the union ranks," said Britton.

"If you vote against this contract you'll have to strike" is how the officials put it — even though everyone knows they've made absolutely no preparations for a fight."

Under these conditions of continued attacks by the employers, tension between the contending classes is increasing. A single strike struggle where workers try to shut down production could electrify the ranks of the industrial unions and broader layers of workers.

"Thinking about these things helps us better appreciate the importance of the fights that are occurring today, while not losing sight of the challenges rank-and-file fighters face in the coming battles," Britton said.

'Gates must go!'

Britton reported on the work carried out in his union local to extend solidarity to Rodney King, a construction worker who is Black and was viciously beaten by Los Angeles police officers in March, to illustrate the possibilities that exist to fight alongside other workers in bringing the weight of the unions to bear on important fights unfolding today.

The OCAW local sent a letter to King solidizing with his fight for justice. The unionists also sent a letter to William Robertson, head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, backing the union official's support for King.

During the reports on "The working-class campaign against imperialism and war," SWP members in the unions assessed the results of their activities over the last eight months in opposition to the U.S.-led war against the people of Iraq and mapped out plans to deepen this campaign.

Communists, by standing firm and openly opposing the allied assault on Iraq, in spite of the barrage of prowar propaganda from the capitalist media and the prowar positions of the union officialdom, won respect from their coworkers, including from those who supported the war.

More and more facts are coming out about the imperialist slaughter of more than 100,000 Iraqi soldiers and civilians, how the U.S. government is primarily responsible for the present attacks on and conditions of the Kurds and Shiites, and about the hypocrisy of the allied governments and the United Nations Security Council. As a result, many workers and young people will be open to socialist views and the fight against imperialism and its wars.

The refusal by the U.S. government and its allies to open their borders to Kurds and other fleeing Iraqis, while cynically setting up refugee camps deep inside the country, will also provide opportunities to win a hearing.

Socialist unionists will build on the success of the campaign against the war and take advantage of the new openings to bring revolutionary politics to their coworkers and to young people who are appalled by the imperialist atrocities.

"We fought to inform working people about the truth about the reactionary aims of the U.S. imperialists and their allies," said Priscilla Schenk to the meeting of socialist auto workers held in St. Louis.

Schenk and coworker Harold Searcy successfully stood up to an attempt by the Iowa cops and U.S. Secret Service to interrogate them at work because of their antiwar views. Exercising their democratic rights, the antiwar workers refused to talk to the cops.

"We sought to mobilize working people against the war," Schenk explained. "We knew we weren't strong enough to stop the war. We knew we couldn't stop the massive slaughter. But what we could do was deepen our discussions with our coworkers and get as many of them as possible involved with us in antiwar actions."

"Bring the troops home now, end the criminal blockade of Iraq, stop the bombing — these were the demands we raised," the socialist unionist recalled. "We went to our coworkers, to union meetings, to protests, to university campuses, and to coalition meetings. Many of us ran as candidates of the Socialist Workers Party in local elections. We explained that the war abroad was an extension of the war by the employers and their government on working people and their unions at home."

Sales of socialist press are central

Communist workers made sales of the socialist press on the job a top priority.

These sales during the war drive and the bombing and invasion of Iraq show what will be possible for the international sales drive that runs from April 27 to June 15.

Socialist workers voted to discuss and adopt sales goals as part of the international effort. The centerpiece of the circulation drive is winning new readers to the weekly *Militant*. The energy, spirit, and confidence that socialist workers gained over the past several months can help set the pace for the sales effort aimed at reaching thousands of workers and youth.

During the course of the war the bosses in many factories attempted to restrict the right of antiwar workers to express their views.

Management at the McDonnell Douglas Apache helicopter plant near Phoenix, Arizona, threatened to fire Betsy McDonald. She had expressed her antiwar views during a question-and-answer period at a company-sponsored prowar rally on the factory grounds.



Militant/Lisa Hickler

Rail workers rally in Wyoming leading up to April 17 strike

A few workers booed when McDonald spoke against Washington's war in the Midwest but others listened attentively.

Many of McDonald's coworkers, even though they didn't agree with her views, felt she had the right to express them. They let it be known that they were opposed to McDonald being fired. The company backed down.

At Litton Precision Gears in Chicago, organized by the IUE, management tried to intimidate supporters of the *Militant* from distributing the paper in the plant. But the socialist workers held their ground. They successfully talked to their coworkers about their right to oppose Washington's war, without victimization.

Workers willing to listen

"What we found in all 10 unions is that workers were willing to listen to what we had to say," stated auto worker Jeff Powers. "We had respect in the plants for what we had done before the war. We were known as fighters for the union, and for women's and civil rights."

"Right-wingers were emboldened by the war," he noted. "There were also many who wore the yellow ribbons or flags and supported the war. But in almost every plant there were 1 or 2 or 3 workers who wanted to fight against the war with us."

Many who spoke at the meetings of socialist workers noted that at the height of the U.S. assault, some coworkers stopped talking to the socialists.

But when the bombing stopped, the pressure diminished. Holding civil discussions, wearing antiwar buttons, and distributing the *Militant*, the *International Socialist Review*, and the book *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast! Cuba Speaks Out at the United Nations* during the war paid off.

"Some workers who were pushed away from us have begun to rethink what has happened," stated Powers. "We can have more civil discussion with them."

"We should talk to that one coworker or two who read the *International Socialist Re-*

view and took it seriously," said oil worker John Benson. "We should try to work with these coworkers and recruit them to the socialist movement."

Socialists in the 10 unions will be able to help the Young Socialist Alliance recruit new members both by talking to their coworkers who would be most interested in joining and by working with the YSA to recruit students on the college and high school campuses.

The Pathfinder Readers Club, which offers substantial discounts on Pathfinder books to its members, is another tool in the working-class campaign against war. It will be attractive to workers who want to know more about imperialism, how capitalism functions, and how to unite the working class to effectively fight against the ruling rich.

Workers need to read the information and analysis that can only be found in Pathfinder books: on the history of the labor movement, Marxism, the roots of imperialism, and the ideas and revolutionary example of Malcolm X. Signing up new members for the Readers Club will pave the way for future recruitment.

New effort for freedom for Mark Curtis

At all 10 meetings, socialist workers discussed how to win increased support for freeing trade unionist and political activist Mark Curtis. Curtis was framed-up on false charges of rape in 1988 and sentenced to 25 years in jail.

The socialist activists decided to participate in a newly-launched international effort to ask that the Iowa State Board of Parole schedule a special hearing for Curtis in July.

Workers who back Curtis want to win official support from the 10 international unions they belong to for his fight for freedom.

"We want to involve our coworkers in this fight," noted Schenk. "We want to get them to send letters to the parole board in Iowa and to go with us to visit union officials to win their support."

Joining in the effort for a new parole hearing does not require that union officials or others take a position on Curtis' frame-up by the Des Moines police.

Curtis has more than met the usual criteria for release. He has served more than the average amount of time for those convicted of the sexual assault charge. His prison record is exemplary.

One example of the opportunities in winning union involvement for Curtis' fight for freedom is the recent backing by miners of UMW Local 2420 in southern Illinois. The local's president gave a presentation on the Curtis case to the local. The unionists voted to endorse the defense effort and donate \$500 to help the fight.

Socialist unionists, by preparing for the war, remaining firm, openly opposing the war at its height, and participating in the international campaign against the imperialist war drive, strengthened their work over the past months.

As Washington's goal of stability in the Middle East crumbles and the bosses' assault on the standard of living and rights of working people deepens, communist workers will build on the experience of the past several months to continue advancing a working-class campaign in defense of the interests of the toilers around the world.

UTU member Mike Galati from Salt Lake City; UMW member John Hawkins from Birmingham, Alabama; ILGWU member Margaret Jayko from San Francisco; and IUE member Olga Rodríguez from Newark contributed to this article.

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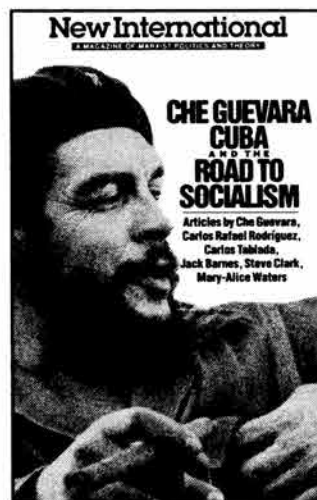
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Washington moves to force Kurds' return

Continued from front page
from destabilizing the region.

Only the U.S. government has the military power and capability to enforce the proposal. "The U.S. effort is crucial," British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd noted. "Whose planes are we talking about, whose money... it comes from all of us, but overwhelmingly from the United States."

Washington was especially concerned about the impact of the growing refugee population on its close ally, the Turkish government. According to the *New York Times*, Turkish President Turgut Özal "pleaded" with Bush to set up the camps in Iraq to prevent the Kurds from entering Turkey.

Millions of Kurds in Turkey are oppressed by the capitalist regime there. Until recently they were denied the right to speak Kurdish in public. Turkish police fired on an April 14 demonstration of 5,000 Kurds in Diyarbakir, about 360 miles from the border, killing at least five. The protesters were marching in support of Iraqi Kurds.

U.S. forces will police the Kurds

Washington is concerned that the entry of the Iraqi Kurds could influence a rise in the struggle of Turkish Kurds and in the region. Kurds are an oppressed nationality not only in Iraq and Turkey, but in Iran, Syria, and the Soviet Union. The rulers of all five countries are hostile to the Kurdish struggle.

Kurdish guerrillas, who are active in substantial parts of Iraqi Kurdistan, will not be allowed to operate out of the camps or bring weapons in, U.S. officials warned. U.S. Army and Marine Corps combat troops will police the camps, keeping the Kurds from organizing against the regime in Baghdad.

According to the *Times*, under the U.S. plan the Kurdish refugees would be "coaxed" into leaving the border areas near Turkey and enter the camps as a step toward returning to their homes in northern Iraq. Bush has said he would like the U.S. troops to leave as soon as possible.

"We hope and intend to turn them [the camps in the enclave] over to the UN to administer as soon as possible," said White House spokesman Fitzwater. "This effort in no way is expected to delay the withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region."

Baghdad immediately came out against the plan, saying it was an attack on Iraqi sovereignty. Washington threatened to use military force if the Iraqi army attempts to intervene.

"We were pulling out of Iraq; now we're coming back in," said one anonymous Pentagon official quoted in the *New York Times*. "There is discomfort that the military mission is being extended. It's playing with fire."

Bush said that five or six camps would be built. Although the president did not say how long it would take to move the refugees out of the freezing mountains along the Turkish border, some reports estimate it will take 40 days or more.

Wretched conditions in camps

In the meantime, 1,000 refugees die every day due to the wretched conditions, most of them infants and children. Many existing camps have no doctors or medical care.

Some 700,000 refugees are scattered across the mountainous area with Turkey.



Isikveren, in southern Turkey, where more than 100,000 Kurds are camped after fleeing Iraq.

Close to a million are in the border area of Iraq and Iran. They are fleeing repression by the Iraqi army and the economic devastation caused by the U.S.-led assault on Iraq.

Most of the refugees are Kurds, but there are also Turkomans, Syrian Christians, Shiite Muslims, and former Iraqi soldiers. Lines of refugees — in cars trucks, tractors, and on foot — stretch as long as 50 miles, hoping to cross the borders.

While some refugees have been allowed into Turkey and Iran, the majority have been forced to remain in Iraq or in isolated strips along the Iraqi border.

'Living in hell'

At one location visited by reporters from the British *Guardian*, some families were living in tents made of thin plastic, "the kind you get your clothes back from the cleaners in." They were among the lucky ones. Many of the refugees have no blankets, tents, or protection from the biting cold and snow. The most fortunate have canvas tents.

The largest single settlement is the Isikveren camp in an almost inaccessible part of Turkey, with more than 100,000 people.

Several refugees died or were injured when they were crushed by crates dropped from U.S. aircraft.

The highest number of airdrops in one day, as of April 19, was 71. The previous high had been 37. This compares to the 3,000 sorties a day the allied coalition flew during the war in bombing missions against the people of Iraq.

"We are living in hell," one Kurd said.

"America did this," said another Kurd to a reporter from the *Boston Globe*, pointing to a mountainside covered with tents. "I don't think anyone should live like us. But anyone who had a hand in making us like this, I would like them to live like us for just one night."

The flip-flops of the U.S. government over the enclave and the growing problems as a result of the war against the Iraqi people were noted by reporters at Bush's April 16 press conference.

U.S. has no long term policy

"Obviously you were taken by surprise," one reporter told Bush. "You have no long-term policy for what is going to happen eventually."

The reporter asked, "Will they [the Kurds] be refugees for the rest of their lives?"

"I hope not," Bush replied.

Reactions among refugees to the plan was mixed.

"Where will they build camps?" asked Abbas Abullah with scorn. "If they build camps and we go, Saddam will kill us."

"If we hadn't left, it would have been like Halabja," said Ali Suleiman, referring to the 1988 attack with chemical weapons by the Saddam Hussein government that killed 5,000 people.

"It will be great if America protects us," one woman told the *New York Times*. "But I do not want to go back to Iraq if Saddam Hussein is still in power."

The introduction of foreign troops into northern Iraq is "good news and another step forward," stated Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of two main guerrilla groups. "Our people welcome the development. They feel they

are not alone now and that some countries are ready to protect them."

A spokesperson for the Kurdish Democratic Party called the U.S. plan an "initial step." However, he said it was not "the required solution."

Vietnam-style quagmire

"I hope we're not talking about a long-term effort," Bush stated.

But despite his assurances, others are not so convinced. The U.S. decision to deploy

UN stalls Iraq on request to sell oil for food, supplies

BY JAMES HARRIS

The government of Iraq requested permission from the United Nations Security Council April 16 to sell \$942.5 million in oil to pay for urgently needed food and other essential supplies for the war-torn country. The Security Council insisted on continuing its inhumane embargo.

In a letter to the Security Council, the Baghdad regime stated, "The situation with regard to food and basic humanitarian needs in Iraq is extremely critical and exceeds the resources available to the Iraqi Government and to international humanitarian organizations."

Iraq needs to buy 1.24 million tons of wheat, 240,000 tons of rice, 80,000 tons of cooking oil, and 40,000 tons of meat, according to the letter, as well as coffee, soap, razor blades, and spare parts for flour mills and bakeries.

A UN report released March 20 described the situation in Iraq, after months of a total blockade of food supplies and the massive allied bombing, as being "near-apocalyptic."

"It is unmistakable that the Iraqi people may soon face a further imminent catastrophe, which could include epidemic and famine, if massive life-supporting needs are not rapidly met," the report said.

Far from responding to humanitarian concerns for Iraq's people, the Security Council, dominated by Washington, is preparing a plan for syphoning off 10 to 15 percent of Iraq's future oil revenues to pay reparations for Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait.

Washington makes no secret of the fact that it is using the sanctions to try to impose a government on Iraq that will serve U.S. interests.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was quoted in the April 18 *Washington Post* as saying, "The willingness of the United States to relax sanctions is going to depend on whether the leadership leaves. We'd be much more willing to relax them if there is a new leadership."

In another move against Iraqi sovereignty, the European Community agreed April 15 to pursue putting Saddam Hussein on trial for war crimes. German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher made the proposal.

U.S. government officials were cautious about the idea, preferring to keep their options open. Baker said, "I think it is important that we think through the issue of a trial in absentia with some degree of caution. It

troops in northern Iraq has widened the debate in ruling circles.

"We should not delude ourselves that this is something we can do for a month and then walk away," said Henry Kissinger, former secretary of state.

Democrat Sam Nunn, chairman of the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, backed the Bush move. "The goal has to be to get them back to their villages," he said. "The principle is already established that we are on Iraqi soil. Why not protect them where they can live?"

Congressmen John Dingell worried that "forty years from now we may be cursed the same way the Palestinian camps curse us now."

The U.S. goal establishing a subservient regime in Iraq and gaining long-term stability in the Middle East is rapidly fading away under the impact of the Kurdish rebellion and flight.

"Something unsettling occurred," complained the *Wall Street Journal* in an April 19 editorial. "The 25-inch TV screens that had held General Schwarzkopf's strong and proud image filled with the faces of frightened Kurds — stumbling, freezing, dying, and pleading."

The way out of the morass, according to the *Journal* is to "depose Saddam, organize an election, then go home with a new government to blame for failure or to praise for success."

Defending his actions, Bush said, "All along I have said that the United States is not going to intervene militarily in Iraq's internal affairs and risk being drawn into a Vietnam-style quagmire."

could result in an international tribunal with no one to prosecute. . . . We should consider the possibility that there might be a way to rid the Iraqi people and indeed the world of this brutal tyrant through other means."

The more and more evident failure of the U.S. government to achieve its goals in the region has intensified debate in ruling-class circles.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security adviser under the James Carter administration, wrote an opinion column in the April 21 *New York Times* on "the increasingly messy aftermath of the war." Brzezinski noted with concern the impact of the March 20 UN report and pointed to the increasing public awareness of the devastating impact of the U.S. war on the people of Iraq. "All this is relevant to any calculus of the war's benefits and debits," he wrote.

"It is important to raise this troubling issue, especially given the emphasis on the idea of the 'just war' and the deliberate evocation of Churchillian symbols and rhetoric to gain public support. The fact is the war was not waged against all odds, against an all-powerful opponent — as had been the case against Hitler — but it pitted the world's only superpower against a third world country armed with second-best weapons."

Columnist A. M. Rosenthal, in his April 16 *Times* column, argued that the deepening fiasco for the U.S. rulers is the fault of government officials who sought to "appease" Arab regimes.

"Just see where realpolitik has gotten us in the Mideast," complained Rosenthal. "Iran in the hands of religious fanatics, Syria and Libya ruled under terrorist fascism, Saddam Hussein still in power, marauding — and a million Iraqi refugees clawing for food."

A news analysis column written by Judith Miller in the April 24 *New York Times* pointed to the nervousness of the Bush administration as it decided to use troops to set up camps in northern Iraq to contain Kurds fleeing repression.

The administration's "repeated statements that the Kurdish refugee rescue project would neither delay the homecoming of American forces nor draw the United States even deeper into Iraq's tortured politics," she wrote, "reflected the enduring legacy of Vietnam — a lingering fear of entangling involvements in unwinnable or unpopular conflicts far from home."

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Interview with Palestinian leader on W

'So long as there is a single Palestinian alive, we will claim

The following interview with the *Militant* by Palestinian leader Hanan Ashrawi was given to Argiris Malapanis by telephone in Ramallah, West Bank, April 9.

Ashrawi was part of a delegation of Palestinian leaders who met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Jerusalem in early March and again in April.

Led by Faisal Husseini, the Palestine Liberation Organization-sanctioned delegation delivered a letter to Baker stating that the PLO "is our sole legitimate leadership and interlocutor, embodying the national identity and expressing the will of the Palestinian people everywhere."

Hanan Ashrawi is an English literature professor at Bir Zeit University in Ramallah. She is also the head of the faculty of humanities at the university. Bir Zeit, like all other universities in the West Bank and Gaza, has been shut down by the Israeli occupying forces since the beginning of the *intifada* in December 1987.

Question. Can you describe the economic and social conditions facing Palestinian working people, especially during the U.S.-led war against Iraq and since the cease-fire there?

Answer. The curfew and other measures taken by the Israeli occupation forces have effectively destroyed whatever infrastructure we had in agriculture and industry.

Since the beginning of the war thousands of Palestinian immigrant workers in Kuwait, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia have lost their jobs. About 25-30,000 returned to the West Bank and Gaza to find no work in industry or on the land. Over 70,000 workers from the West Bank who used to work in Israel are out of jobs, prohibited from entering Israel. Agricultural crops and livestock have been destroyed because farmers could not go to their land. Many were not even able to plant this year.

A very cruel and illegal system of taxation and fines is resulting in the kidnapping of our resources. It all amounts to a very systematic policy of economic strangulation, an attempt to starve the Palestinian population. We never had widespread hunger in the occupied territories but we can now see the beginnings of it.

The work force is under extreme restrictions with the system of the green cards, magnetic cards, and the work permits. In addition, if you want to go anywhere, you need a permit. We cannot enter East Jerusalem, we cannot enter Israel. They have basically cut off contact between towns in the north and the south of the West Bank and between the West Bank and Gaza.

The majority of the work force is unable to find work. Unemployment, officially at 29 percent before the war, has now skyrocketed.

Any type of projects in the occupied territories requires Israeli permits which are almost impossible to get. No remittances from workers in the Gulf are coming in either. To put it in a nutshell, the economic situation for Palestinian workers and farmers is in an absolute shambles.

Socially they are trying to destroy anything Palestinian. So, in addition to the economic strangulation there is an attempt at cultural eradication, at stifling the Palestinian voice and identity.

Q. U.S. Secretary of State Baker is now visiting Israel for a second time since the cease-fire in Iraq. As you were part of the first Palestinian delegation that met with Baker, what do you think are the goals of the U.S. administration in conducting such talks? What is your opinion of these meetings?

A. Well, that needs about a couple of hours. The United States wants to start a peace process for both domestic and international reasons.

The U.S. administration, having waged a war [in Iraq] and having won a war, now wants to present the image of being able to wage peace.

Now I won't go into all the reasons why I think domestically the U.S. administration

wants to start that — the fact that the U.S. economy, like other capitalist economies, is in trouble. But let us say that it wants to go down in history as solving the problems of the Middle East and solving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian-Arab conflict, knowing that the Palestinian question is really the source of instability in the whole region.

But there is tremendous cynicism here about U.S. intentions. First of all, we see a resurgence of the *Pax Americana* and the exclusion of international organizations which the United States activated during the Gulf crisis, such as the United Nations Security Council. All we are asking for is the implementation of UN resolutions. We are not asking for armies, we are not asking for Stealth bombers and B-52's because we don't approve of war anyway. We don't approve of the Gulf war either. The U.S. did not go there to liberate Kuwait.

We are asking for evenhandedness, for uniform standards. If you can activate and bring out of the closet an international institution like the UN to sanction war, then you should get the UN to act uniformly, by the same standards, to implement the 170 reso-

At the same time Israel would like to conclude peace agreements with the Arab countries while attempting to suppress and undermine the real issue and the real cause of the conflict, which is the Palestinian question. They do this while trying to deny the national rights of the Palestinians, trying to deny the actual national existence of Palestinians, by relegating us either to being absorbed by the Arab regimes — part of an Arab delegation — or by saying that the Palestinians are only the inhabitants of the territories and that they don't need official representation.

That's why they are rejecting the PLO — by rejecting our right to self-determination and therefore turning us into a minority within Israel.

All along Israel gives lip service to peace but at the same time is very busy creating facts and transforming economic, geopolitical, and demographic realities in the occupied territories.

We gave Mr. Baker — we prepared a paper — on all the measures that Israel took between his first visit and his second visit to prove to him what Israel's real intentions and responses are. These included the confisca-

major ally and protector as well as benefactor financially and its attitude on the Palestinian has never been really positive.

So it is quite understandable why people are skeptical, cynical, and hesitant and will do nothing that might play into Israeli or U.S. hands at this stage.

There is, of course, another opinion that says the meetings are important, that people should not close themselves off from international contacts, that if you have a clear message, a clear position, you should present it to anybody and you shouldn't be afraid of doing it. But if you close off communication then nobody will know really what is happening, what your demands are, what your rights are, and what your reality is.

I think it is really essential that Mr. Baker and everybody understand the substance of occupation, the human aspect, and what it means to Palestinians: the constant brutalization and dehumanizing; the constant humiliation; the violation of every single type of right, every human right. The right to life, the right to security, the right to health, the right to education — everything is being violated. Our land and resources are being stolen from us. The U.S. government holds responsibility for this situation.

I feel this reality has to be made concrete so that people don't make a mistake and assume that there is a symmetrical situation; that the Palestinians are in a free and democratic atmosphere and can indulge in an evenhanded dialogue. We cannot, because our people are under occupation, with no rights whatsoever.

We have been systematically brutalized and Israel is allowed to hold the peace process hostage and to monopolize whatever developments there are. So it's up to us to make our case heard, to present our case. And to do it in a forthright and as responsible manner as possible.

Q. Shortly after the cease-fire in Iraq, Yassir Arafat and other PLO officials made statements to the effect that the outcome of the war brought the Palestinian question more to the forefront, that somehow the fight for Palestinian self-determination was raised to a new peak. Were there any political or other gains made for the Palestinian people as a result of the outcome of the U.S.-led war against Iraq?

A. It's not a question of gains. There were no gains. The Palestinian question was moved to the forefront of the international agenda as a result of the *intifada*, which is the Palestinian human voice of resistance, as you know. Popular resistance.

But before the Gulf war, as a result of redundancy and brutalization, people became desensitized to Palestinian suffering. It became normal to have Palestinians killed every day. You know, 3 killed, 150 wounded, 4 houses demolished. This became part of reality that people could live with and so it was routinized and people became desensitized.

But the Gulf crisis showed that the real grievances in the region, the real causes of conflict, are not addressed. The real cause of conflict and instability in the Arab world is the Palestinian question. The continuing injustice done to the Palestinians, the stalemate in the peace process, and the lack of any achievements.

This includes attempts at circumventing the real issues, the real representation of the Palestinians, and denying our rights, including the right to self-determination.

More instability and problems

So the Gulf crisis showed that you can demolish countries and wage wars where tens of thousands of people are killed. That does not mean you have addressed the real issues. It means you have probably unleashed more instability and problems. So I think it's important that now — with the imperialists having pledged, having gone down on record as saying that they want stability in the region — now they have to put their money where their mouth is.

They will have to prove whether they will implement those principles they claim to



Hanan Ashrawi (right) and Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini at April 20 meeting in Jerusalem with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker (left).

lutions pertaining to the Palestinian question — not a single one of which has been implemented.

Double standards

So the charge of double standards still remains. We are afraid that the United States might try to decide on its own to control the peace process, to exclude not just the UN, but an international participation such as the European Community for instance, and at the same time succeed in playing the Israeli game.

When they talk about taking that approach we can say they want to deliver the Arabs to Israel and delegate the Palestinian question to the back burner and transform it into an internal Israeli issue — which is what the Shamir government wants to do.

Q. Could you elaborate more on the point you made about "delivering the Arabs to Israel"?

A. Israel, you see, wants to pay the war debt. Israel is willing to carry out what they call CBM's, confidence-building measures — in terms of the opening of some universities [in the West Bank and Gaza], and cease some of its illegal activities — and as a result wants rewards. It wants to have peace talks with the Arab countries to end the state of belligerency, to establish economic ties, to end the boycott. So it is as if Israel wants to pay the war debt by stopping from doing something which was illegal in the first place.

tion of 70,000 *dunams* [17,500 acres], increased curfews and closed areas, the killing and deportation of Palestinians, the demolition of houses, confiscation of more resources and land, the stepping up of settlement activity, and so on.

We feel that this is the real face of Israel that people have to look at and not just talk about peace. If you allow Israel to continue subverting and undermining peace, by creating a counterreality like this, which is illegal, then all talk of peace will become irrelevant, academic in the future — because the foundations of peace would have been destroyed. We don't want Israel to use this as a means to buy time again, and to procrastinate, and to evade the real issues.

Q. Some Palestinian organizations and leaders did not think that these meetings with Baker should take place. What is your perspective?

A. We are not a monolithic society. The PLO approved the meetings, both meetings.

There are of course Palestinian activists and factions that do not approve of the meetings, who feel that they are needless, that they are playing into the U.S. hands and into Israeli hands. Many people are extremely cynical about American intentions.

They say that by doing this the United States, in a sense, is gaining a monopoly over the peace process, rather than bringing it up in the Security Council and the UN. And they are very skeptical about the U.S. because it is not an objective peacemaker — it is actually party to the conflict. It has been Israel's

West Bank our rights'

espouse and address the real causes of instability. That's why the Palestinian issue came up to the forefront again.

But from their point of view there isn't any justice to the Palestinian cause or a rightness that has to be pursued. It has a dynamic which is not subject to external factors but subject to the fact that we are resisting a brutal occupation. We have rights that have to be addressed and unless these rights are addressed, unless the grievances are redressed, then there will constantly be conflicts and insecurity and instability in the region.

At the same time, the U.S. has made new clients in the region, not just Israel, but among some Arab regimes who are now facing problems of credibility with their own people as a result of their alliance with the United States.

In order to gain some credibility they will have to appear to be champions of the Palestinian cause. So they will have to pretend to deliver something. And this is a new reality now. The United States is trying to deliver something to its new clients, to its new allies — people who were part of the U.S. alliance, who served American interests in the region. Now the U.S. will have to give something back in return even if it is just superficial appeasement.

Annexing land, expansion as a source of security, has been proven false. Because it's not as Bush said. It's not geography that creates peace or stability.

They may expand and acquire more land and steal more land from other people. It doesn't mean that they are going to have security. It means that they are merely perpetuating the situation of instability and conflict. And, of course, now Israel, in the region especially, is not a strategic asset as Reagan used to say, but is a liability when it comes to an Arab-Arab conflict. Because they had to bribe and cajole Israel to stay out of the war because it was a liability.

Q. We have been witnessing in Kuwait, after the U.S. military victory, the widespread victimization of Palestinian workers. Attacks on Palestinian fighters have also been frequent in other Arab countries, like Syria and Egypt. Similar attacks against Palestinian militants have also taken place in Iraq.

A. It's true there has been repression of Palestinians in Iraq, as well as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and the Gulf countries.

Q. What do you think of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's goals in this invasion, and his subsequent "linking" of the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait with the Palestinian struggle?

A. I know that there are long-standing grievances between Iraq and Kuwait. I know of the whole question of the Rumaila oil fields, the Bubiyan Island, and the question of scheduling of debts. All these are concrete issues and they should have been dealt with between Iraq and Kuwait or in an Arab context. They did not necessitate war. They did not necessitate an invasion of Kuwait. As a people under occupation we cannot but oppose any occupation, including that of Kuwait.

Palestinian issue manipulated

So the "linkage" came after the fact. It is the unfortunate fate of the Palestinian issue to be manipulated and used by the Arab leaderships historically for their own ends. You see it is an acid test, a source of credibility. It is part of the "credentials" of any Arab leader. And most Arab leaders have succeeded in oppressing their own people, using the pretext of a national cause which is the Palestinian cause. They have manipulated us for their own ends, whether economic, political, regional, or international.

So I think Saddam adopted the Palestinian cause, the "linkage" issue for his own ends. In all because it was a Palestinian demand to apply international legitimacy uniformly. If you want to end one occupation why not end all occupations especially the long-standing occupation of Palestine.

Number two it is a very emotive stance. It



Palestinian home in Beit Sahour on West Bank, destroyed by Israeli army.

Militant/Argiris Malapanis

appeals to the Arab masses. If you look at who supported Saddam and who did not you will see that it was the people who were poor, the people who were oppressed, the people who watched this obscene and inequitable distribution of wealth in the region, the people who are part of the south as opposed to the north, or the people who do not have oil wells.

In a way it was a regression to a messianic approach. Instead of placing your faith in the power of your own people and the determination of the popular movement, you started to place your faith in an individual, which is against the intifada ethos.

The intifada, the Palestinians, and the PLO had succeeded in removing the Palestinian cause from Arab patronage and manipulation, and placed it on its own terms within Palestinian hands and under Palestinian sovereignty. We speak for ourselves, we don't want to be manipulated by anybody, and we don't want to be a justification either for the Arab regimes' repressive policies or a means of raising funds and so on.

With the Gulf crisis there were many complications on the Palestinian issue. As a result, and again it is a part of our sad fate, the Palestinians are left at the mercy of the host countries. As you know, one-third of the Palestinians are under occupation and two-thirds are in exile. The people who are in exile have no rights, no protection, and most of them don't have any papers, passports, or identity cards — especially those in the Gulf countries. They have nowhere else to go.

Unfortunately, at the end of the Gulf war the Palestinians were systematically victimized in Kuwait and in the Gulf countries. In Saudi Arabia they lost their jobs. They were told to leave, they have nowhere to go, and a real human tragedy has developed which very few people know about. The fact is that now the Palestinians — for the third, fourth, and fifth time — have become refugees.

Most of them are educated people who have either spent all their lives in the Gulf countries or were born there and who served these countries. They are now stateless people. They cannot come home either, since Israel does not allow them to come back to the West Bank or Gaza. The minority who have come back are destitute, having lost their life's wages.

In Kuwait it is even much more desperate. Individuals and the whole community of Palestinians are being subjected to very brutal and inhuman treatment. Many were killed, imprisoned, tortured, or deported.

We made many appeals on their behalf. You mustn't punish individuals, you mustn't punish people for political positions. We hope that this will stop. We have assurances that it will stop. But I am not very confident that the whole process of vindictiveness and cruelty to Palestinians will stop immediately. Any day that this goes on is one day too long.

Q. What do you think are the accomplishments of the intifada and what in your opinion

are the prospects to win the fight for Palestinian self-determination?

A. The intifada is a massive popular upheaval. It enjoys not just the support but the actual full participation of the whole Palestinian population under occupation. So it is a real democratic force which starts from the base up, with several dimensions.

One dimension is that of overt resistance as expressed in demonstrations, marches, strikes, and so on.

The second dimension is a dimension of building the institutions of a Palestinian state; of embodying the Palestinian state, of social transformation as well; of delegitimizing the Israeli occupation and legitimizing the authentic Palestinian voice and will. And this is the battle of wills also — the battle to reject the artificial and illegal reality of the occupation and create your own authentic reality, even under occupation. It is the defiance of all attempts at eradicating your own identity and reality.

The third dimension is a political dimension because ultimately the intifada is a political statement. We committed ourselves to a political settlement of the conflict by accepting the decisions of the international community and the resolutions of the UN under the broad title of international legitimacy — that we adhere to the November 1988 resolutions of the Palestine National Council (PNC) for a two-state solution. Therefore, this political dimension means that we have embarked on a new phase in the history of Palestinian struggle.

'Myth of Israeli democracy'

Among the other accomplishments of the intifada, in addition to these three dimensions — and I think state building and nation building is very important — is the fact that we have put the Palestinian issue back on the international agenda. We have, for the first time, been heard articulating our own cause, our own narrative, and not through other peoples' eyes. We have reversed the myths of Israeli democracy and benign occupation. We have proven what the occupation is really like and exposed Israel's real underbelly, if you wish.

We have gained international consciousness, if not conscience.

But it does not mean that we have solved the issue. It's a very, very long and arduous journey. We have tremendous opposition. Israel must never be underestimated. It has succeeded in hijacking not just the peace process but Palestinian rights in denying our existence here. We have dehumanized ourselves in some people's eyes.

We also have a long way to go because right now the issue of self-determination has become crucial in the world. And yet people's rejection of our legitimate leadership, which is the PLO, and people's rejection of our right to statehood, which are both expressions of our right to self-determination, is clear. We are being told that a right which is given to everybody by right — every nation has a right to self-determination — is withheld from us by virtue of occupation. We want to be treated like any other people in the world; to be able to choose our own leadership, to build our own reality, and to have our own state.

As you know, we did have our own reality, our own state, before 1947-48. We have made an historic compromise. The restoration

Continued on Page 10

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African National Congress puts forward constitution proposals

The African National Congress (ANC) has published its proposals for a constitution for South Africa, with the aim of encouraging public debate.

The ANC's proposal advocates a legislative assembly and president elected by universal franchise of all citizens of South Africa.

It includes a bill of rights that would uphold freedom of speech, assembly and religion, and would include specific allowances for legislation for affirmative action to advance victims of past discrimination. Also among the ANC proposals is that indigenous African languages, Afrikaans, and English should all be accorded equal status.

The ANC has long fought for the election, by universal suffrage, of a constituent assembly, which would have the job of writing the constitution. The apartheid government has resisted this, arguing that a constitution should be written prior to any such election.

The ANC called on the government to publish its own proposals for a new constitution.

European Community to lift sanctions on South Africa

The 12 governments of the European Community (EC) agreed unanimously April 15 to lift economic sanctions against Pretoria. The sanctions, imposed five years ago, banned imports of gold coins, iron, and steel from South Africa.

EC officials had earlier told Pretoria that the introduction of legislation to repeal basic laws of the apartheid system would be grounds for lifting sanctions. The South African Parliament is not expected to approve this legislation until July.

Following the EC decision, a joint conference of the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress, meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, condemned the EC move as a "disservice to the struggle against apartheid."

Gorbachev's plea met by intensified strikes

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev addressed an urgent plea to leaders of the country's republics in an April 9 speech later telecast to the nation. "The economy is coming apart. The institutions of power are paralyzed," he said, calling for a moratorium on strikes and political demonstrations.

The very next day a wave of strikes swept the city of Minsk, capital of the Byelorussian republic. The strikes involved 64 large enterprises, including auto, tractor, and electronics factories. Workers were protesting the doubling and tripling of prices on many basic goods.

The strike by one quarter of the country's 1.2 million miners, in its sixth week at the time of Gorbachev's appeal, was joined by a bus drivers' strike in Kemerovo, Siberia — one of the mining strike centers. The miners are demanding that Gorbachev and his government step down. The coal strike has nearly paralyzed the steel and auto industry.

The same day Gorbachev made his appeal, Georgia's parliament voted unanimously to proclaim the republic's independence from the Soviet Union. In March a big majority of the population had voted in a referendum for secession.

Togo rulers respond to protests with violence and promises

After a month of student strikes and protests, the government of Togo, in West Africa, announced it was granting opposition groups' demands for amnesty for political dissidents and legalization of political parties. It also agreed to a lowering of the price of gasoline, which had been demanded by a taxi drivers' strike.

Two days earlier the army had attacked students and other residents of Bè, a center of political opposition in the capital, Lomé, killing 22. Soldiers forced the victims into a lagoon and clubbed those trying to escape. Following this a crowd marched to the center of town, chanting "Eyadéma murderer" and "Give us weapons to get rid of Eyadéma." Etienne Eyadéma heads the regime.

Palestinian shepherds defend land; fight forced relocation

BY DEREK BRACEY

KISSAN, West Bank — Facing overwhelming odds, about 600 Palestinian shepherds have been fighting attempts by the Israeli occupation forces here to force them off their land and relocate them so that their village can be annexed to a nearby Jewish settlement.

"They are always demolishing our homes," said Yusef Mohammed Awad, a Palestinian shepherd. "When we build homes they demolish them. This is our land." Virtually the entire village has been destroyed three times since 1973.

Kissan is located in the mountainous area of Bethlehem, about 25 miles southeast of Jerusalem, within walking distance of the Dead Sea.

"In 1973 they came to my father, who could not read or write, and told him to sign a document if he wanted to keep his home. So, he did," explained Awad. Two days later Israeli bulldozers began demolishing the village.

Hussein El'Eibeyet, another Kissan resident, explained that the government is trying to drive them off the land in order "to annex it to the Ma'lie Amos settlement in the future, which covers a large portion of our village's land. Settlers from all over the world live in big houses there."

The Israeli government has been building settlements like Ma'lie Amos in the West Bank and Gaza since the 1967 Arab-Israeli war. This has been a conscious Israeli government policy, viewed by many in the Israeli ruling class — like Housing Minister Ariel Sharon — as leading to the eventual annexation of the occupied territories.

Israeli authorities have carried out a similar policy in the Golan Heights, conquered from Syria in 1967 and formally annexed by Israel in 1981. According to an April 1 report in *Newsweek*, 8,000 Jewish settlers live there among 15,000 Druze villagers who eke out a living from raising sheep and goats.

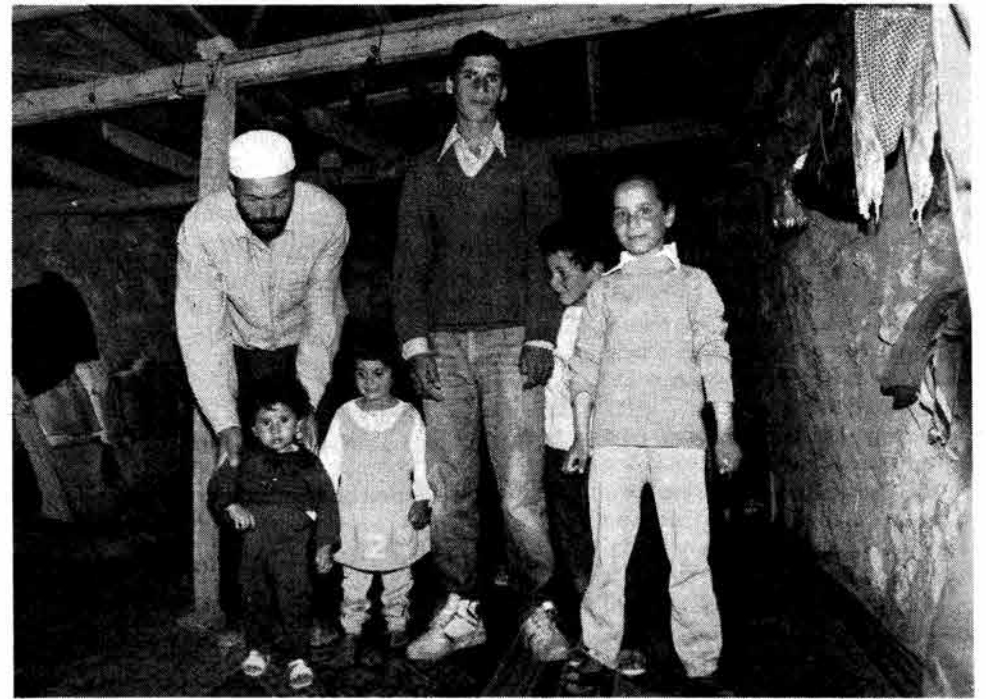
The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) has maintained that Israel's settlement policy violates UN resolutions and is an attempt to sabotage any negotiated settlement of the Palestinian question.

Settlement policy debate

There is a debate within the Israeli ruling class about how far to go with the settlement policy in the occupied territories.

In a recent radio interview Ariel Sharon said, "Israel has always built, is building, and will continue to build in Judea, Samaria [West Bank] and the Gaza strip. . . . This does not hamper the peace process. On the contrary, the more secure Israel feels, the greater the chances of peace."

Sharon also proposes annexing Jewish settlements, to "protect against likely pressures to give back land." On March 21, Sharon stated that 13,000 new housing units will be built on the West Bank, as part of a plan to build 250,000 units for settlers in the next



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Yusef Mohammed Awad (left, holding child) is one of Palestinian shepherds leading fight in Kissan, West Bank, against forced relocation by Israeli authorities.

two years. Sharon maintained that the new units were not intended for new immigrants from the Soviet Union.

Over 270,000 Jews from the Soviet Union have recently immigrated to Israel. Many are homeless and unemployed.

Foreign Minister David Levy stated at a press conference during Baker's April 8-10 visit to Israel that the Israeli government was not taking any "provocative action" in the occupied territories. He said the government was not directing new immigrants to settle there, "although every Jew has the right to live where he wants." Levy told Baker that Sharon's settlement plan has not received cabinet approval.

Ran Cohen, a member of the Knesset, the Israeli parliament, from the Citizen Rights Movement, accused Sharon of a "blatant attempt to deceive the world and encourage Soviet immigrants to settle in the West Bank."

Cohen pointed to Sharon's plan for building a new town on the "green line" that separates Israel from the West Bank. Cohen said the government would direct immigrants to an adjoining town within Israel and then offer housing across the border.

The ultra-right Moledet Party, part of the ruling government coalition in Israel, has pushed for more settlements in the occupied territories. Moledet opposes any plan that would separate the settlements from Israel.

During an April 3 march of 5,000 settlers in the West Bank, Moledet Party head Rehavam Ze'evi blamed the government "for not ordering the army to put an end to the intifada." The march was organized to protest the killing of a settler in the West Bank town of Dolev. In response to the

killing, the Israeli government confiscated 1,000 dunams [250 acres] of Palestinian land and began preparing it for another settlement.

Many Jewish settlers move around in the occupied territories armed with automatic weapons; many Palestinian villagers have been killed by settlers.

Homes demolished

In 1975 Israeli authorities completely banned construction in Kissan. Since then, the villagers have been struggling against repeated demolitions of their houses that the Israeli government maintains are "unlicensed." Kissan resident Hussein El'Eibeyet's house was demolished in 1982, 1987 and again in 1989.

Kissan residents have taken their case to the Israeli courts. "We went to the High Court to allow us to continue building our homes," said Awad, another of the residents. "In October 1986 the court issued an order saying the military authorities had to settle the dispute within nine months and allow us to rebuild."

Bethlehem military authorities refused to obey the court order saying they had the authority to circumvent the decision. "Next, they demolished 14 houses," Awad said.

Now many families like Awad's are living in stone shelters that leak through the roof and walls when it rains. "We have 12 people in my family and we have one room. You can see how unstable the structure is," said Awad. "It can fall any time."

Late last year, several families, like the El'Eibeyets, moved to caves about a mile away, looking for warmer shelter. On February 17 they were ordered by the occupying army to leave the caves because they were allegedly in a military-exercise zone.

Awad also explained that the government has interfered with their shepherding, their sole source of income. "In 1986, the military came and had our sheep taken to Nablus, about 120 miles away. We had to pay \$15 per sheep to get them back," he said.

On Jan. 1, 1988, Ahmed El'Eibeyet was grazing his flock in the lands adjacent to the village. Israelis in two military cars and a civilian car approached him, saying grazing was prohibited there and he had to leave, his father Hussein said. After an argument, an Israeli shot him point-blank in the neck, killing him.

Awad said despite the extreme hardships, the villagers are determined to stay. "This is our land. We have had it over 100 years and longer. When Turkey was here, when Britain, when Jordan was here, we had it. We have the deeds. We only want this land, and perhaps a school for our children."

On April 4 the Bethlehem military governor "came and said we could have homes, electricity, a school and a clinic. But we have to move somewhere else. We told him no," Awad said, raising his voice.

"I want to tell the American people that Israel has nothing to do with democracy. Bush said he wanted to liberate Kuwait, but he gives bulldozers to Israel, that occupies our land, to demolish our homes," Awad said.

Interview with Palestinian leader

Continued from Page 9

tion of Palestinian rights is essential, if there is to be any real peace in the region. Otherwise, so long as there is a single Palestinian alive, there will be the challenge, not just to Israel, but to the world community, that there has been an historical injustice done. As Palestinians, we will claim our right to Palestine.

Q. At the founding of the PLO the adopted program was for a democratic, secular Palestine, where Arabs and Jews can live together. Is the new position of the PLO for an independent state in the occupied territories the only realistic way forward?

A. It is not what we call absolute justice. It is relative justice, in view of the geopolitical conditions that were created in the region. It is not historical justice, it is not national justice. But we have come to grips with the fact that it is the only realistic approach. In proposing the secular, nonsectarian, democratic state, we felt that this would be a much better solution to the region. But unfortunately Israel rejected it. They insist on having an exclusively Jewish state.

In Palestine the majority of the land was Palestinian. Since that wasn't applicable, the PNC position of November 1988 was to accept the principle of the partition of the land.

Because, while people sit back and talk and discuss and while resolutions are made and filed and are gathering dust in the archives of the UN, Palestinians are dying every day. The land is being stolen from us. Our resources are being stolen from us.

You know that more than 75 percent of the water of the West Bank has been stolen by Israel? You know that more than 55 percent of our land in the West Bank has been stolen, confiscated? You know that there are thousands of Palestinians who have died since 1967. They will make life so unbearable for us that we will not be able to stay here.

I think Israel should be stopped before it manages to eradicate the Palestinian reality altogether here and before it creates irreversible facts. We don't want to wait. We don't think that we will appreciate a sense of guilt from the world after the fact when it is too late. We want things to be remedied now so that we can maintain what is left of Palestinian land, of Palestinian lives, on Palestinian soil.

Namibia's president salutes role of Cuba in African struggles

'Cuban contribution decisive to our independence'

Introduction

BY JAMES HARRIS

The *Militant* is printing here a speech given by Sam Nujoma, the president of Namibia, in Cuba on March 1. Nujoma spoke at a ceremony where Cuban President Fidel Castro presented him with the José Martí Order, Cuba's most prestigious award. José Martí is a Cuban national hero who fought against Spanish colonial rule in the late 19th century.

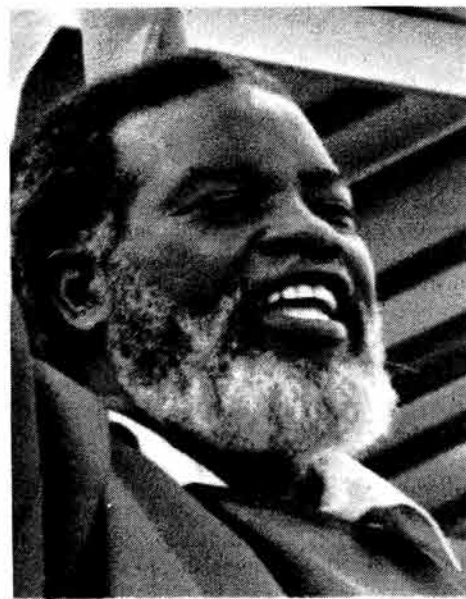
Nujoma's speech describes the role Cuban volunteers have played in southern Africa in helping advance struggles against imperialist domination and for national liberation and social and economic development.

Namibia became an independent nation in March 1990, ending more than a century of colonial rule. From the latter part of the 19th century until the first year of World War I, German colonialists ruled the country. In 1915 Namibia was invaded by South African troops. In 1918 the newly formed League of Nations awarded Namibia to South Africa.

The South African colonial rulers set up reserves in Namibia called Bantustans that racially segregated the country and enforced divisions among Africans along language and tribal lines. Many Namibians were deprived of their land and cattle, forcing them to sell their labor power to the white-owned businesses and farms.

In November 1975 thousands of Cuban troops were sent to Angola, responding to the request of the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) government, which needed military aid in turning back an invasion by South African troops.

The Cuban Communist Party called the



The Namibian
Namibia's President Sam Nujoma

volunteer mission "Operation Carlotta," named after a slave who led a rebellion in Cuba in 1843.

The Angolan people's struggle against the South African regime was closely intertwined with the fight of the Namibian people for independence, led by the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO). The Namibian struggle was given a mighty impulse by the victory scored over South African troops by Cuban forces, SWAPO troops, and the Angolan army at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola in March 1988.

This military victory laid the basis for a change in the relationship of forces in southern Africa — weakening the apartheid regime, and forcing South Africa to negotiate the withdrawal of its troops from Angola. For the first time Pretoria agreed to begin compliance with United Nations Resolution 435, which outlined steps for Namibian independence.

Today, independent Namibia faces the problems of a country whose economy has been warped by decades of colonial exploi-

tation and domination. Its economy is still deeply connected with that of South Africa, which remains Namibia's chief trading partner. Pretoria still controls Walvis Bay, Namibia's only deep-water port. The monetary unit in Namibia is the South African rand.

In an interview in the March *West Africa*, Nujoma says that the infant mortality rate in Namibia is between 79 and 85 deaths per 1,000; the rate for children under five is 90–110 per 1,000. Some 106,000 children under five, over 30 percent of all five-year-olds, are affected by malnutrition. Of the 265,000 11-year-olds eligible for school every year, 27 percent have no access to schools and of those who enroll, only 37 percent complete primary school.

The text of Nujoma's speech below is taken from the English-language edition of the March 4 *Granma Weekly Review*.

* * *

Comrade Fidel Castro Ruz, commander in chief of the Cuban Armed Forces, first secretary of the Central Committee of the Com-

“We shall always remember the sacrifices made by the Cuban internationalist forces in southwestern Africa . . .”

munist Party of Cuba, president of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers, Comrades, members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba,

Comrades, members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, Comrades ministers,

Your Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Comrades and friends:

Allow me, first of all, to express our sincere gratitude to you, Comrade Commander in Chief, through you to the fraternal people and government of Cuba for the exceptionally warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to me and my delegation since our arrival in your beautiful country.

My delegation and I are extremely delighted to be back in Cuba, the land of José Martí, Camilo Cienfuegos, Máximo Gómez and Che Guevara. Although this is not the first time that I am visiting Cuba, this visit has deep political and emotional significance for me in that it is the first time that I am here as president of a free and independent Namibia.

Comrade Fidel, you have just conferred upon me the Order of José Martí, the highest award of the Cuban revolution. By conferring the José Martí Order upon me, you have done me and the people of Namibia the greatest honor. The name of José Martí is synonymous with the Cuban revolution and its brilliant achievements. He is as much a Cuban national hero as he is a hero of all the people who believe in freedom and social justice,

1. Camilo Cienfuegos was a Rebel commander during the Cuban revolutionary war against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista that triumphed in 1959. His plane was lost at sea that same year. Ernesto Che Guevara was a central leader of the Cuban revolutionary government from 1959–65. He led internationalist volunteers in aiding Congolese (Zairian) liberation fighters in 1965. Guevara was murdered in 1967 after being captured by U.S.-aided Bolivian troops, while leading a guerrilla movement against the Bolivian military dictatorship. Máximo Gómez was a leader of Cuban revolutionary armies during the 1868–78 and 1895–98 independence wars. He became commander in chief of Cuban independence forces in 1870.



Cuban fighters in Angola. Display reads "Long live internationalism."

and against oppression and tyranny.

José Martí was an outstanding intellectual in Latin America and his revolutionary legacy had inspired the Cuban leaders.

It was a historic coincidence that the attack on the Moncada Garrison in 1953² took place exactly 100 years after the birth of José Martí. He died heroically in combat against the Spanish occupation at the age of 42. Since the Moncada attack and the subsequent triumph of the revolution, the Cuban people have maintained faith in the future of the revolution, confidence in the people's virtue, certainty in their victory and their capacity and determination to defend their revolutionary gains.

Relationship cemented in blood

I want to take this opportunity to express, on behalf of the government and people of Namibia, our most profound gratitude to the government and people of Cuba for your unwavering and selfless support rendered to our people during the protracted and heroic struggle for the independence of Namibia. The people of Namibia and the people of Cuba have had a long and fraternal relationship cemented in blood shed and sacrifices made during the many years of the struggle against the enemies of liberation, peace and justice.

The valiant people of Cuba made a decisive contribution to the success of our liberation struggle and the achievement of our independence. We shall always remember the supreme sacrifices made by the Cuban internationalist forces in the region of southwestern Africa. I would like to seize this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the eternal memory of all those comrades who made supreme sacrifices on the African battlefield so that we today may enjoy freedom, independence, and dignity. We reiterate our solemn pledge by saluting them in the conviction that their sacrifices were not in vain.

When the South African forces invaded the People's Republic of Angola, following that country's independence in 1975, the Communist Party and the government of the Republic of Cuba decided, at the request of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), to send the first battalion of regular troops to defend the territorial integrity of Angola. I recall that at that historic moment, you, Comrade Fidel, made a statement which I quote: "Those who once sent enslaved men to the Americas perhaps never imagined that one of those peoples who received the slaves would one day send their fighters to struggle for freedom in Africa."

The statement that I have just quoted was particularly true when, on May 4, 1978, Cuban internationalist fighters were the first to come to the defense of Namibian women and children who were under savage attack by the South African racist forces at Kas-

2. Fidel Castro led an attack on the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba on July 26, 1953, launching the revolutionary armed struggle against Batista. The attack failed and Batista's troops massacred more than 50 captured combatants. Castro and other survivors were later captured and imprisoned.

singa, resulting in the massacre of several hundreds of innocent men, women and children. Also, many critically injured survivors were flown to Havana for medical treatment.

Following the Kassinga massacre, the government of Cuba, at the request of SWAPO of Namibia, made available excellent training facilities where our young people could be trained in an environment conducive to study.

Two such institutions of learning are the Hendrik Witbooi and Hosea Kutako primary and secondary schools on the Island of Youth. On completion of their secondary education many of these young Namibians went on to further their studies in Cuban institutions of higher learning. I am pleased to mention that many young Namibians who successfully completed their education in your country are currently being deployed in the service of Namibia and are effectively contributing to the consolidation of our independence.

Cuito Cuanavale: watershed

For many years, Cuban internationalist fighters and the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) combatants, as well as the brave comrades of FAPLA, the Angolan armed forces, fought shoulder to shoulder in defense of the territorial integrity and independence of the People's Republic of Angola. The most decisive and historic of such battles was that of Cuito Cuanavale.

It was at Cuito Cuanavale that the Cuban internationalists and FAPLA and PLAN combatants heroically and successfully resisted South African aggression and its local agents, forcing them to beat

“The most decisive and historic of such battles was that of Cuito Cuanavale . . .”

a final and humiliating retreat from Angola, thus paving the way for the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435. That was the finest example of internationalism in action!

Comrade Fidel, you appropriately summed up the historic significance of that battle for Africa, when you said, and I quote: "As from this day we will refer to the history of Africa before Cuito Cuanavale and after Cuito Cuanavale." Yes, the battle of Cuito Cuanavale represents indeed a watershed in the history of Africa, particularly that of southern Africa.

Subsequent to that heroic event Namibia has gained its long awaited independence, the comrades in South Africa, under the valiant leadership of the ANC, are making significant strides toward bringing apartheid tyranny to an end. The prospects for lasting peace and economic reconstruction in Angola have never been better than they are at present. Likewise, the situation in Mozam-

Continued on Page 13

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Labor in the Nineties: How to Fight Strike-Breaking and Union-Busting. Speaker: Betsy Farley, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America. Sat., April 27, 7 p.m. 111 21st St. S. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

Salt of the Earth. Film of 1951-52 strike by Local 890 Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers at Empire Zinc mine in New Mexico. Speaker: Mike Shur, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 3937. Sat., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 1809 W Indian School Rd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (602) 279-5850.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Washington's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III. Celebrating two new issues of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory. Speaker: Joe Swanson, Socialist Workers Party, member United Transportation Union. Sat., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

San Francisco

Catastrophe in Iraq. Open U.S. Borders to Kurdish People. Video: *Nowhere to Hide*. Speaker: Margaret Jayko, Socialist Workers Party, member International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. Translation to Spanish. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

L.A. Police Brutality: An Exception or the Rule? Speaker: Rodney Holt, Socialist Workers Party, member International Association of Machinists, activist in the fight against police brutality. Sun., April 28, 2 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (313) 831-1177.

Young People and the Fight against Imperialism and War: Resistance to the Employers' Offensive at Home and Abroad. Speaker: Angel Lariscy, national secretary, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (313) 831-1177.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

The Free Trade Agreements: What Stand Should Working People Take? Speaker to be announced. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

Railroad Workers' Fight for a Better Contract and the State of the Labor Movement Today. Speakers: Steve Styskal, member Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; Greg Preston, Socialist Workers Party, member United Transportation Union. Sat., April 27, 7 p.m. Translation to Spanish. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (402) 553-0245.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

No to Tuition Hikes! No to Cutbacks! Education is a Right! Speakers: striking student, City

College of New York; students from State University of New York at Albany; representative, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$4. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

Open the U.S. Borders to the Kurdish People. Speaker: Seth Galinsky, *Militant* staff writer. Sat., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$4. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

OHIO

Cleveland

Railroad Workers under Attack. Speaker: Scott Ware, Socialist Workers Party, member, United Transportation Union Local 225 Strike Committee. Sat. April 27, 7:30 p.m. Translation to Spanish. 1863 W 25th St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (216) 861-6150. 1863 W 25th St. Donation: \$2.50. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

Open the Borders to the Kurdish People. Sat., May 4, Translation to Spanish. 7:30 p.m. 1863 W 25th St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Open the U.S. Borders to the Kurdish People. Speaker to be announced. Sat., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

Celebrate the Publication of the New Internationalist. Speaker to be announced. Sat., May 11, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

TEXAS

Houston

The Kurds and the Continuing U.S. War against Iraq. Speaker: Al Budka, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial.

Tel: (713) 522-8054.

Defend Bilingual Education. Speakers: Jim Herrington, vice president, Pasadena Education Association, member National Education Association Board of Directors, District 4; Josie Cannon, Minority Advisory Committee, Pasadena Education Association; Alicia Pérez, parent advocate. Sat., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

The Eastern Airlines Strike. Lessons for Today's Labor Battles. Speakers: Jim Valdez, representative, United Mine Workers of America Local 1190; Simon Seikaly, vice president, International Association of Machinists Lodge 1287; Ray McLing, executive board officer, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1384; Robert Godwin, assistant district chairman, Transportation-Communication Union 2506; John Langford, member United Steelworkers of America Local 8319; Barbara Greenway, Socialist Workers Party, member International Association of Machinists Lodge 568. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

BRITAIN

London

Opening Guns of World War III. Speaker: Jonathan Silberman, executive secretary, Communist League. Fri., April 26, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Sponsor: Militant Forums. Tel: 71-401-2293.

Sheffield

Fighting the Recession. Speakers: Tim Rigby, Communist League candidate for parliament, member Rail Maritime Transport; representative National Union of Mineworkers. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 2A Waverley House, 10 Joiner St. Donation: £1. Sponsor: Militant Forums. Tel: 0742-729469.

CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Stop Police Brutality! Community Control of the Police. March and Rally. Sat., May 11. Assemble, 12:00 noon, Broadway and Olympic; march, 1 p.m.; rally, 2 p.m. at Parker Center, First and Los Angeles streets. Sponsors: Rainbow Coalition, NAACP, American Civil Liberties Union, Brotherhood Crusade, L.A. Coalition against U.S. Intervention in the Middle East, others. Tel: (213) 296-2630, 655-3728, 487-1720.

Demonstration. The Los Angeles Student Coalition supports the call for the Immediate Resignation of Chief Gates. Every Saturday until further notice. 10 a.m. to noon. Parker Center. Los Angeles Student Coalition meetings every Sun., 2 p.m. Yablon Center, 7213 Beverly Blvd. Tel: (213) 250-5500 days, 467-6888 evenings.

San Francisco

Class Series on Socialism. Every Tuesday, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Sponsor: Young Socialist Alliance. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Protest the Vandal Attack on the Pathfinder Mural. Speakers: Meryl Lynn Farber, executive director, Friends of the Pathfinder Mural; Valerie Caffee, president, New Jersey Anti-

Apartheid Mobilization Coalition; Ben Jones, artist, art professor, Jersey City State College. (Organizations listed for identification only.) Sat., April 27, Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$5. Proceeds go to restore Pathfinder Mural. Sponsor: Friends of the Pathfinder Mural. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Haiti Progrès: 8th Anniversary Celebration. Cultural presentation, dinner, entertainment. Sat., April 27, 8 p.m. St. Francis of Assisi Auditorium, 400 Lincoln Rd. Donation: Adults, \$15. Children under 12, \$8. Reservations and Tickets: 1398 Flatbush Ave. Tel: (718) 434-8100, 434-3940.

CANADA

Montréal

Young Socialists Discussions on the Middle East War. Every Sun., 3 p.m. 6566 boul. St-Laurent. Sponsor: Young Socialists. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

Sydney, Nova Scotia

The Cuban Revolution Today. Speaker: Roger Annis, member Communist League, par-

CANADA

Montréal

Defend Mohawk Land Rights Fighters on Trial! Speaker: Gary Watson, Communist League, member United Steelworkers of America. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 6566 boul. Saint-Laurent. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Forum ouvrier militant/Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

Imperialism's Assault on Iraq: Opening Guns of World War III. Fundraising benefit for the Marxist magazines *New Internationalist*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional*. Speaker: Steve Penner, contributing editor. Sat., May 4, Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 6566 boul. Saint-Laurent. Donation: \$10. Sponsor: Forum ouvrier militant/Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

Vancouver

Anti Free-Trade Campaign — A Nationalist Trap for Working People. Speaker: Ned Dmytryshyn, member Communist League. Sat., April 27, 7:30 p.m. 1053 Kingsway, Suite 102. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

The Soviet Union in World Politics Today. Speaker: Mark Severs, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Seattle City Council. Sat., May 4, 7:30 p.m. 1053 Kingsway, Suite 102. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

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One Hundred and Twenty Years after the Paris Commune. Continuing the Fight for a Workers' and Farmers' Government. Speaker: Kate Rhodes. Sat., April 27, 7 p.m. 157a Symonds St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Socialist Forum. Tel: (9) 793-075.

Behind the Employment Contracts Bill. The Deepening Crisis of New Zealand Capitalism. Speaker: Mike Treen. Sat., May 4, 7 p.m. 157a Symonds St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Socialist Forum. Tel: (9) 793-075.

participant in 1989 work-study tour of Cuba. Sat., April 27, 3 p.m. Center for International Studies, Vogue Annex, Charlotte St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Young Socialists. Tel: (902) 562-9829.

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Introduction to Socialism Discussions. Every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. 157a Symonds St. Sponsor: Young Socialists. Tel: (9) 793-075.

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Opening Guns of World War III. Celebrating the publication of two issues of *New Internationalist*. Speakers: Michel Dugré, Communist League, Canada; Marcella Fitzgerald, Communist League, Britain; Sigurlaug Gunnlaugsdóttir, Communist League, Iceland; Carl-Erik Isacson, Communist League, Sweden; representative, Socialist Workers Party, United States. Sat., April 27, 6 p.m. Pathfinder Bookstore, Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Sponsor: New International Fund. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

May Day: Launching Communist League Election Campaign 1991. Meet Communist League candidates. Wed., May 1, 5 p.m., Pathfinder Bookstore open at 11 a.m. Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

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Clearly a mad-dog terrorist — Madouh Aker, a Palestinian activist, was busted by the Israeli



Harry Ring

military for writing a medical instruction sheet on how to cope with tear gas.

Would Big Oil lie to you? — Prior to the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska, Alyeska Pipeline Service

Co., a consortium of oil biggies, had assured they could contain any major spill there in 48 hours. Now it's disclosed they had already secretly decided that they didn't have the equipment to do so, and didn't intend to try.

But everything's fine — The first quarter of 1991 saw the worst slump in company dividends since the same period in 1971.

You gotta admire the chutzpah — Congressional probers found Stanford University has overbilled the taxpayers some \$200 million in research expenses, including such items as bashes at the president's campus home. In response, Stanford

proposed it study its billing procedures and be reimbursed \$5 million for doing so, plus \$2 million a year for updates.

Joe Cool — A Stanford spokesperson explained the university should be reimbursed for checking its swindle sheets because the government always pays for such studies when a university says it's being underpaid.

A royal trip — For a slated U.S. visit, Britain's Queen Elizabeth's retinue will reportedly include her husband, his orderly and two valets; the queen's secretaries, maids, dressers, etc.; plus a "Mistress of the Robes," "Lady of the Bed-chamber," "Page of the Presence," and three Scotland Yard cops.

Pure profit — Despite environment protests, the Ice Age Co. will likely continue mining ice from a glacier in the Canadian Rockies. It's marketed in Japan and fetches some \$30 a bag. Noting that it's pollution-free, Ice Age says, "It's for people who pay \$60 for a bottle of Scotch and don't want their drink polluted with chlorine-filled ice cubes."

The war at home — Touting it as a "management primer for the 90s," one book chain is offering *The Art of War*, a 2,000-year-old Chinese work on the subject. It may or may not be an omen, but the book is being

offered at a 50 percent discount.

Budgetary tip — If you're going broke in Manhattan paying as much for child care as you're earning, ditch the kid and get a dog. For \$20 a day, you can drop it off at Yuppie Puppy Pet Care. "About the same as parking your car in a garage," says the owner.

Exactly what he wanted — Robert Campeau's U.S. retail empire may have gone down the tube, but he's built a \$10 million retreat in Austria's Alpine foothills. One newspaper reported, "The overall effect is of a souped-up, semi-mutated southern plantation house."

Namibia's president salutes Cuba's role in Africa

Continued from Page 11

bique is improving by the day. All these developments would no doubt not have been possible without the resounding defeat of the racist army at Cuito Cuanavale.

Namibia's arduous struggle

Dear Comrade, it is about one year since Namibia became independent and joined the community of sovereign nations of the world. However, we are fully conscious of the fact that we have only completed the first phase of our struggle, that of political independence. We are acutely aware that a much more complex and arduous struggle, that of economic development, still lies ahead. We are convinced that we will strive for economic development with the same vigor and determination with which we fought for our political emancipation.

Furthermore, the independence of our country remains incomplete as long as the port of Walvis Bay and the off-shore islands are occupied by South Africa. Negotiations for the settlement of the issue of Walvis Bay are about to start and we will insist on the unconditional return of the whole of the port

Cuito Cuanavale represents a watershed in the history of Africa...

and the islands to Namibia, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 432 (1978).

On the eve of the first anniversary of our independence, we can say with justifiable pride that we have succeeded in maintaining the unity of our people, ensuring peace and political stability and safeguarding the territorial integrity of our country. This was made possible because our policy of national reconciliation and justice for all our people is working and accepted by the Namibian citizens.

As we embark on the more complex second phase of our struggle for economic development and social justice, we are greatly inspired by the Cuban experience and accomplishments. We know that in the first years of your revolutionary history, you were able to eliminate unemployment, illiteracy, hunger, gambling, and other vices that were the negative manifestations of the exploitative system in this country.

Like Cuba, at the time of the triumph of the struggle, Namibia has inherited enormous socioeconomic problems, the most pressing of which are: glaring poverty among the majority of our people; widespread unemployment; a high illiteracy rate; inadequate health care facilities; poor housing conditions and a depressed and lopsided economy. Having analyzed these problems systematically and methodically, and following a country-wide tour which I and my prime minister have been conducting, my government has concluded that, due to the complexity of the problems, and because of the constraints on our domestic resources, we would not be able to achieve our development objectives without the support of friendly countries, including the Republic of Cuba.

Cuba's distinguished record

Considering your impressive successes made in the fields of education, health, agriculture and construction, we have requested

from the government of Cuba assistance in those areas. In this regard, we are most grateful to Cuba for having been the first country which provided Namibia with medical doctors and other medical specialists. We are also grateful that Cuba has given sympathetic consideration to our additional request for technical experts to assist us with the implementation of our agricultural and construction projects.

In making these requests, the government of Namibia is proceeding from the knowledge of Cuba's distinguished record of rendering invaluable assistance to other developing countries. Cuba's own impressive successes in mass mobilization for food production and construction revolving around the similar concept of a development brigade was another reason which led us to make the request for technical experts in these fields.

In requesting Cuba provide technical assistance, we are not unmindful of the economic difficulties which your country is currently facing. However, we have complete confidence in the ability and commitment of the Cuban people to defend their manifest accomplishments despite the economic blockade, which has been in existence for three decades, imposed on your country. We admire the Cuban leadership and courage of the people of this great nation!

The Namibian government and people are determined to promote cooperation between our two countries. In this regard, I am of the view that by the end of this visit an umbrella agreement on the establishment of a joint commission for economic, scientific and technical cooperation, as well as an agreement on education and culture, will be signed.

Gulf war

Comrade President, comrades, the situation in the Gulf which has evolved into a devastating full-scale war with the attendant loss of life and massive destruction of infrastructure and property is of grave concern to my government. While our country has con-

demned the invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait by Iraq and supported UN Security Council resolutions, we cannot accept the situation of hostilities and destruction which have gone far beyond the scope of those resolutions. It is all the more regrettable that a full-scale land war erupted and is being pursued at a time when Iraq had

Cuba was the first country which provided Namibia with doctors and other medical specialties...

agreed to withdraw from Kuwait, which, and nothing else, was the mandate of the Security Council resolutions.

On South Africa, we have been witnessing with cautious optimism the positive developments which are taking place in that country, such as the release of political prisoners, including Comrade Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of political organizations, and the repeal of some of the apartheid laws.

However, while the process of change undertaken so far in South Africa is encouraging, we believe that sanctions and all other forms of pressures on South Africa should be maintained. We wish to hail the valiant people of South Africa for their persistence and bravery, which have forced the South African regime to opt for negotiations. We also hail the initiatives taken by the ANC and other patriotic forces to unite all the anti-apartheid forces, in strengthening unity by forging a common stand amongst them when facing the regime in the negotiations.

Free South African prisoners

We call on the South African government to release all political prisoners and detainees, to allow for the unconditional return of political exiles, and to repeal all

the remaining repressive legislation. The removal of these obstacles will create conditions conducive to negotiations. We reaffirm our support for and solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa in their just struggle against the obnoxious system of apartheid and for the establishment of a nonracial, democratic, and unitary state in their country.

The government of Namibia welcomes and indeed commends the presidents of Angola and of Mozambique for the bold initiatives that their governments have taken to find peaceful solutions to the internal conflicts in those sister nations. It is the ardent desire of the government of Namibia to see an end to bloodshed, suffering, and destruction throughout our region. It is only when peace and stability prevail that there can be sustained economic development for all of us in southern Africa.

Solidarity with Palestinians

I wish to reiterate our strong support for the courageous people of Palestine, especially the brave and unyielding children of the *intifada*, who are daily confronting the Israeli army of repression. Our government fully supports the convening of an international peace conference on the Middle East as the only way of bringing about a lasting solution to the question of Palestine.

I wish to extend our solidarity to the people of Western Sahara in their struggle for national self-determination and nationhood.

Comrades, distinguished guests, allow me, therefore, to renew the call for international solidarity from this sacred soil of Cuba and to propose a toast to the health of the commander in chief, Comrade Fidel Castro, to the everlasting glory of the heroic Cuban sons and daughters, and to all those who died for their country and for the revolutionary ideals which brought them freedom, justice, honor and victory not only to their motherland but also the people of Namibia.

Patria o Muerte! Venceremos! ★
[Free homeland or death! We will win!]

Cuban military service will be cut to 2 years

BY SETH GALINSKY

Mandatory service in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces will be reduced from three years to two, according to an official statement in the March 19 edition of *Granma*, newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party.

Males above the age of 18 are eligible to be drafted into the army or the interior ministry. Besides draftees, many men and women sign up as volunteers.

Obligatory military service was first instituted in Cuba in 1963, two years after the U.S.-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion.

Although most Cuban men are eligible to be drafted under the law, in practice numerous exemptions have been granted. Reduced stints were given to soldiers who had "exemplary conduct," who participated in voluntary missions abroad, or who carried out their service under "complex conditions," the statement from the armed forces ministry noted. University students, at least until 1988, were for the most part exempt.

The reduction in the term of obligatory service is possible because the "Revolutionary Armed Forces have reached a very high degree of improvement in the framework of

the war of the whole people," the ministry said.

In 1980, the Cuban government reconstituted the Territorial Troop Militias as part of a strategy of increasing the participation of workers and farmers in the defense of Cuba in answer to threats by the U.S. government.

There are now several million men and women in militias and reserve units, according to the ministry.

The ministry said the reduction was also possible due to the return of 50,000 members of the armed forces who had been stationed abroad, particularly in Angola.

The withdrawal of Cuban soldiers from Angola, where they helped defend the country from South African aggression, is to be completed this year.

A Cuban troop presence since 1977 in the Congo is also being ended.

"There is a new situation in the region thanks to changes that have occurred and the recent independence of Namibia," stated Cuban Brig. Gen. Víctor Schueg Cólás. "This makes our military presence unnecessary."

Cubans who had served in Angola or on other internationalist missions as doctors,

teachers, or construction workers have played an important role in strengthening the revolution on their return. Many veterans of the war against the South African invasion of Angola have been at the forefront of volunteer brigades that were launched as part of Cuba's rectification process, building child-care centers, health clinics, and housing.

The return of the internationalist combatants "will considerably reinforce our defensive capability," the armed forces said.

The reduction in mandatory military service also comes in the context of steep cutbacks in government spending as a result of growing difficulties with Cuba's principal trade partners in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The cutbacks will not affect the ability to defend the Cuban revolution, the ministry said. The high level of "combat readiness" of new recruits and returning soldiers will make the defense stronger, the ministry added.

An additional benefit of the change, the statement concluded, is that young people "will have more time for studies, work, and their personal and family life."

Rail strike & class independence

The recent one-day nationwide U.S. rail strike showed that rail workers want to fight against the bosses' concession demands.

While lasting only 19 hours due to swift government intervention, the strike gave a glimpse of the potential power of rail workers.

Railroads carry 37 percent of all U.S. freight. Major freight railroads were shut down tight. Coal, auto parts, grain, steel products, paper, and other goods and material simply sat on idled freight trains. Nothing moved.

The brief strike showed what can happen when workers shut down production in a strike. It stands as an example for working people, revealing the potential power of the working class. This is important because workers need experiences that show what it means to successfully shut down production. The way it appears to many workers, based on their experiences of the past decade, a strike is not a tactic for gaining ground against the employers and strengthening the union. In many of the hardest fought strike battles of the 1980s, production was not shut down and workers lost their jobs. Working people need some examples that can cut through this negative record and can restore the strike weapon to labor's arsenal.

During the U.S.-led war against Iraq, top rail union officials took a prowar patriotic no-strike pledge and urged their memberships to accept the concession recommendations of the president's panel.

Now they have been rewarded by Congress. Democrats and Republicans alike all raised their hands and voted to end the strike and impose givebacks on the rail workers.

It is a good lesson on what happens when labor does not have its own foreign policy, accepts the leadership of the employing class, and relies on the parties of the bosses.

As rail unionist Paul Swanson pointed out: after labor had poured millions of dollars in congressional lobbying efforts, "all we can muster is five votes in Washington."

Workers and farmers have no voice or representatives in Congress. The action of Congress demonstrates that workers need to see themselves as part of a class with interests that are different from and opposed to the employers, their political parties, and their government.

It shows the need for a labor party based on the unions and independent of the prowar, anti-union Democratic and Republican parties. Workers and farmers need a labor movement that rejects the narrow framework of unionism as conceived by the bureaucracy and fights for a movement that thinks socially and acts politically in their class interests, not those of the bosses.

While the top rail union officialdom did very little to prepare its members for the strike, many rail workers began to look for ways to organize themselves and sought to draw other working people toward the fight. Many responded and showed their heartfelt support.

The truth is that many workers and farmers want to see a fight that breaks loose from the retreat the labor movement has been in during the more than decade-long onslaught by the employing class. They want nothing more than to show their solidarity for such a fight. The fight of rail workers is not over by the act of Congress. The labor movement should actively oppose any attempt to impose concessions and should stand with rail unionists' efforts to secure a decent contract.

It is through being part of the resistance today and the battles tomorrow that workers can build and realize a fighting and transformed labor movement that acts in the interests of all working people.

Deepen working-class campaign

Continued from front page

point on what Washington's goals are and what they mean for working people.

This is the time to continue bringing the working-class campaign against imperialism and its wars to workers, farmers, GIs, and students around the world.

To understand the depths of the U.S. rulers' problems, it is worth looking at what they set out to do when they launched the war against the Iraqi people.

Their goal was never to liberate Kuwait, fancy words and skillfully crafted speeches aside. Washington wanted to regain what it had lost in the region with the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979 by a massive revolution. The U.S. rulers sought to change the relationship between states and classes in the Mideast and shift this relationship of forces in their favor. They wanted to protect their oil profits and place themselves in a stronger position against their imperialist competitors, particularly in Germany, France, and Japan.

To do this they needed a subservient regime in Iraq, essentially a protectorate, that could look out for Washington's interests.

The U.S. rulers had another dream, too. They hoped that the massive use of force in Iraq would restore self-confidence to the military officer corps and convince it that Washington could win another major war after losing in Vietnam two decades ago. The rulers hoped that working people in the United States would once again believe in the myths of U.S. foreign policy — that Washington is fighting for democracy and that the officer corps is worthy of their trust.

But their dreams of the "new world order," in reality just an attempt to salvage the crisis-ridden capitalist world order, are going up in smoke. Bush's announcement that "the Vietnam syndrome" is behind us is wishful thinking at best. Even where they made some gains — bolstering their position against their imperialist competitors — they, at the same time, exacerbated tensions and accelerated rivalries.

Workers around the world were appalled by what one U.S. pilot called the "turkey shoot," the massacre on the road to Basra, where fleeing soldiers and civilians were mercilessly cut down.

The corruption, greed, and incompetence of the ruling monarchy in Kuwait, the mad rush by U.S. companies to win contracts for rebuilding the country, the continued victimization of Palestinians and other non-citizens who do most of the work there, reinforce the growing skepticism working people have about Washington's goals.

Josie Valderrama, a 17-year-old high school student from Los Angeles, expressed what is on the mind of many workers. "During the war, I was affected by all the patriotism and agreed that the war was necessary," she told the *New York Times*. "Now I think: 'What's so great about what we did?' We wiped out an army that didn't have a chance in the first place."

The devastation of the Kurdish peoples, set up by the U.S. war, forced its way into the world media. At first the U.S. government and its allies in Turkey hoped to keep the Kurds up in the mountains, out of sight and out of mind. Now Washington and its allies are setting up enclaves, like Indian reservations, to herd Kurds back to Iraq and force them to stay in that country, instead of opening the borders of the United States, Britain, France, and other countries to these victims of what the imperialist war set in motion.

Some of the imperialists talk about organizing war crimes trials to judge Saddam Hussein. But what moral authority can Washington and its allies have after slaughtering more than 100,000 Iraqis, and setting up the Kurds for one of the most massive and horrendous refugee disasters in this century?

The lessons of the U.S. debacle are not lost on working people.

Noting Washington's delayed response to Kurdish refugees suffering hunger and exposure, but its lightning speed in getting Congress to break the recent rail strike, one rail union official said, "They don't care about hungry children in America or hungry children in Iraq, but they will wake up Bush in the middle of the night to force us back to work."

Workers in the United States are beginning to see that the war abroad is part and parcel of the war at home.

Rodney King was treated by the Los Angeles cops the same way that the Iraqi people were punished by Washington. Is there really any difference between the attitude of Police Chief Daryl "drug users 'ought to be taken out and shot'" Gates and Gen. Colin "we're going to cut it off and kill it" Powell?

For workers to advance in defending our rights and standard of living here, we need to see the Kurds, the Palestinians, and the Iraqi people as our brothers and sisters who face a common enemy: the capitalist system.

More and more workers can be won to demanding: end the blockade against Iraq, end the U.S. occupation of Iraqi territory, and open the U.S. borders to the Kurds and other refugees fleeing the war-torn region.

As an integral part of campaigning against imperialism and what it is doing in the Middle East, the *Militant* has launched an April 27-June 15 circulation drive to get subscriptions to the socialist press into the hands of workers and revolutionary-minded youth. We will also be selling special *Militant* supplements, the two editions of *International Socialist Review*, which contain the United Nations report on the catastrophic conditions in Iraq and articles on the working-class campaign against imperialism and war. We also will promote the Marxist magazine *New International*.

The *Militant*, *International Socialist Review*, and *New International* are the weapons workers need to strike a blow for the truth. They present a clear working-class policy to face the war abroad and the war at home.

Join us by ordering your bundle today.

'One day longer' than Eastern Airlines

BY DOUG JENNESS

On airport ramps and in steel mills, rail yards, auto plants, and all sorts of other work sites across the country they can be found. There may be one or more where you work. They are the 8,500 members of the International Association of Machinists who for 22 months struck Eastern Airlines until it folded in January.

Wherever these former Eastern employees — ramp service workers, cleaners, stock clerks, and machinists are now working, most are describing to their new coworkers the rich experience they went through, what they did, what they learned, how they changed, and how they knocked Frank Lorenzo, their employer, out of the airlines industry altogether.

Lorenzo's goal was to build a nonunion airline empire, and all the other airline owners, as well as many other employers, were watching to see if he would succeed. The

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

Eastern workers showed that perseverance and working-class solidarity can beat back even the most determined union-busters.

If there isn't a former Eastern striker where you work sharing these experiences firsthand, you can still learn about them and help others to do so by buying a copy of a new book, *The Eastern Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists*, published by Pathfinder. Former Eastern strikers will also want to get a copy. For \$8.95 it's a good buy (15 percent off for members of the Pathfinder Readers' Club).

There's an introductory article by Ernie Mailhot, a ramp worker and cleaner at Eastern Airlines in Miami and later in New York. Mailhot was strike staff coordinator for Local Lodge 1018 of the IAM at La Guardia Airport in New York. He is a socialist and has been active in many union and other social struggles for two decades.

The book includes a section from "The Working-Class Campaign Against Imperialism and War" by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes, that is to appear soon in *New International* no. 7.

The longest article is by Judy Stranahan, who covered the fight at Eastern for the *Militant* during its last eight months. This piece is based on the weekly reporting in the paper during the entire length of the strike. For the first 14 months of the struggle Susan LaMont organized the *Militant* coverage, wrote extensively on it, and helped establish a weekly column to which strike activists and supporters contributed.

A 14-page chronology and an index are a big help to the reader and 16 pages of glossy photos, most of them by *Militant* correspondents, bring some of the highlights of this important battle to life.

The Eastern strike was part of the resistance to abominable conditions that had driven other workers, backed into a corner by union-busting employers, to fight back in the past few years. Most notable were the strikes of packing-house workers in Austin, Minnesota; paper workers; Greyhound bus drivers; NYNEX communication workers; and New York *Daily News* employees. The lessons of the packing-house fight are chronicled in a Pathfinder pamphlet, *The 1985-86 Hormel Meat-Packers Strike in Austin, Minnesota*, by Fred Halstead.

Mailhot notes that one of the main lessons of the Eastern struggle is that the strikers looked to mobilizing their own forces, other workers in the IAM, and other unionists. "The unity of the Machinists, flight attendants, and pilots in a major national strike, over a period of eight and a half months, is something that had not been seen in the airlines industry before," he writes. This was against a formidable array of forces — from Lorenzo to the federal government — and "the obstacle represented by the strategy of the union officialdom" that looked to the bankruptcy court, buyouts, and government intervention.

Mailhot explains that the fighting Machinists and their supporters showed that "workers will step forward and put themselves on the line in the interests of working people everywhere." By preventing Eastern from running a profitable airline as long as it operated with scab labor, they "would help set an example for every working person in the United States and internationally."

Their slogan became that they would last "one day longer than Frank Lorenzo." When he was removed it became "one day longer" than Eastern. And they did.

The Eastern strikers proved it's better to fight than to belly-up to the employers. By defeating Lorenzo and Martin Shugrue, his court-appointed successor, they showed other bosses that union-busting is not the highway to higher profits.

While the book describes the gains achieved by the Eastern strikers, in the context of other recent strikes where workers lost their jobs to scabs, it will leave many readers wondering whether it's possible to conduct strikes that can close down production, win jobs back, and begin to make a breakthrough in developing an effective alternative strategy to the obstacles placed by the union officials.

Proof that this can be done will be determined in fierce struggles by fighting workers — struggles that are inevitable as the employing class continues its relentless offensive.

Garment industry crisis looms over contract talks

BY BECKY ELLIS

NEW YORK — "This is about as tough as it gets." That's how one official of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) characterized the negotiations that began March 12 for the outerwear contract that will expire May 31. The contract covers some 100,000 workers and sets the pace for all other garment contracts that expire later.

The center of the U.S. garment industry is in New York City. Garment is the city's largest manufacturing industry. The majority of garment workers covered by the outerwear

UNION TALK

contract are in New York and are members of ILGWU Local 23-25. Ninety percent of them work in Chinatown.

Over the past few years the garment industry has been in a crisis. The current recession and the Gulf war have been followed by more retail bankruptcies. Sales in stores that specialize in clothing were down 8.9 percent in January and 7.3 percent in February from last year. Another factor in the crisis is the tripling of inexpensive apparel imports in the last decade.

Eighty-seven apparel companies failed in New York City last year. However, larger, big-name companies are doing better than ever. Bud Konheim, president of Nicole Miller, said, "We had the best year of our lives in 1990 and we're 50 percent ahead of last year right now."

The crisis in the industry has had a devastating impact on garment workers, however. Employment in New York's apparel industry has been declining steadily for many years.

Membership in the ILGWU in New York has dropped to 70,000 from 150,000 in 1970.

Many garment workers have become part-time workers, often sent home after three or four hours of work. Some are laid off for as much as six months out of the year.

It is common to find sewing machine operators who have worked in several shops in the last few years because so many shops have closed or because the operators were not able to work enough hours to make a living. The ILGWU says that more than 250,000 people lost jobs in the garment industry during the 1980s.

Contract enforcement in many shops has become more difficult. Some bosses do not give workers holiday pay due them or pay the guaranteed minimum hourly wage. Workers get sent home even if there is work they can do. In addition, bosses pay straight time for overtime work.

Conditions in the garment shops continue to worsen. There are fewer mechanics to repair the machines. The bathrooms and other facilities are dirtier. Safety precautions are increasingly ignored.

In New York City garment workers are largely immigrant workers. Many of the workers, both in the union and those who remain unorganized, don't have the necessary work permits. Thousands of them are more vulnerable to being forced to accept below-minimum wages and 10-hour work days.

In addition, growing numbers are forced into doing work at home at low pay with no benefits. The Labor Department also reports more and more instances of children working in shops. In 1989 the department reported a 140 percent increase in child-labor violations in the previous five years. An estimated 75,000 children

work illegally in the New York City area.

As the negotiations begin, the ILGWU is asking for a 3 percent increase in employer contributions to health care and an 18 percent wage hike over three years.

The Health and Welfare Benefits Fund is administered by the union and is maintained by payments from the employers. A union-run health clinic provides free medical care for working members of the ILGWU. A family plan provides medical care for members' dependents.

As health-care costs continue to skyrocket, the fight to maintain the employer contributions to the Health and Welfare Benefits Fund is a central issue. This was true in the 1985 negotiations as the bosses wanted to reduce their contributions. But at that time they were rebuffed and forced to actually increase their payments.

In 1982 there was a fight around the outerwear contract. That year the bosses in Chinatown attempted to bust the union by refusing to sign a new outerwear contract that had been agreed to by other garment employers in the Northeast.

Garment workers in Chinatown mobilized their community to meet the antilabor assault. Five thousand workers joined a Committee to Defend the Union to prepare for a possible strike.

On June 24, 1982, 20,000 people turned out for a pro-union rally. One month later 20,000 demonstrated again. Virtually all the bosses signed the contract.

Some ILGWU locals have begun to have meetings where union officials explain the framework in which the negotiations are taking place and union members present what they would like to see as the central demands to the bosses.

Becky Ellis is a member of International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union Local 62-32.

LETTERS

Kurd, Shiite victims

We now have the sad spectacle of thousands of Kurds huddled and dying in the mountains along the Turkish border. Exposure and hunger are killing Kurdish children each night.

In southern Iraq, the army of Saddam Hussein has successfully stopped the Shiite rebellion and slaughtered thousands of people under the barrels of the U.S. military machine. In some instances, the U.S. military even disarmed the rebels before sending them back into the slaughter house.

During the war against Iraq, President George Bush repeatedly called for the people of Iraq to overthrow Hussein. Unfortunately these courageous people believed the U.S. president and took up arms thinking that this huge American and allied army would come to their aid. Now they are paying an awful price with their lives.

Jonathan Walker
Salt Lake City, Utah

Another tea party

I am writing to thank you for sending your paper to me. I find it very comforting that there are some people out there who see how corrupt our government is!

On your April 12 article about the Supreme Court's decision on coerced confessions: the way the system is supposed to work is by balance and checks. So how can Bush submit a memorandum when he's part of the executive branch?

It used to be back in the 1930s that if the government violated the accused's constitutional rights, the case got dismissed — not a new trial. The accused don't get a

second chance, so why should the government?

This all goes to show how corrupt the government is. The only way I see to fix the problem is another "Boston tea party."

Anything they don't like, they just make a new law for it. Justice is weighed by how much money and power you have. How come Bush's son isn't in prison for his part in the \$50 billion rip-off? And isn't it something that no one knows where all the money is?

It is the people's money the banks use. They loan it to them at high interest rates, then they rip it off and tell the people they have to pay for it so they can relend it to them at high interest rates. This government is so corrupt it makes me sick.

And I don't understand how the stock market has not collapsed yet. We should be in a depression, but they have found some way to prolong that too.

Justice for all? Only for the rich and powerful. The bottom line is we live in an oppressive country — we have to make our own government.

The sooner the tea party, the better.

A prisoner
Alden, New York

Indispensable news

I just wanted to drop a note of encouragement, support, and solidarity regarding your coverage of the Gulf slaughter. I purchased a 12-week subscription to your paper at a demonstration here and found it indispensable for news and analysis of Washington's latest episode of genocide of Third World peoples. Though I found the critique of Chomsky absurd, I don't have the time to write comments.

Thank you for reporting during the war and continuing the struggle to get the truth out about the imperialists' war crimes.

A reader
Cheltenham, Britain

Prison debates

Last year I requested a subscription to the *Militant*, which you kindly sent me. During the year I looked forward to every issue of the paper, which was a beacon of light in this cesspool. We had many enlightening debates over your stories, particularly concerning the oil war. However, the subscription will expire in the near future, and I once

again wish to thank you for an extension of my subscription.

A prisoner
Dixon, Illinois

Events in Cuba

I hope that the *Militant* will make every effort to focus in on current events inside Cuba today. During the next year, Cuba will most likely go through its hardest tests due to the shortages caused by outside factors. The path of this struggle will offer examples for socialists the world over to follow.

Dennis Markell
East Rochester, New York

'Old Glory'

Reading your letters column a few weeks back, there was a question of whether the working class and progressive forces should indulge in flag-waving.

Or if flag (old "gory") waving was as if to say "I'm patriotic too," trying to fit in in American society.

I think we should wave the flag, but the red banner of socialism, not old glory.

G.M.
St. Paris, Ohio

Send 'Militant'

I am in the Air Force and am presently incarcerated. I heard about your newspaper and I'm interested in receiving a subscription. I'm not receiving my normal military pay, since I'm a prisoner and my job is not a "paying job." So, I'm asking that I be afforded a subscription at no cost or at reduced cost.

An airman
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

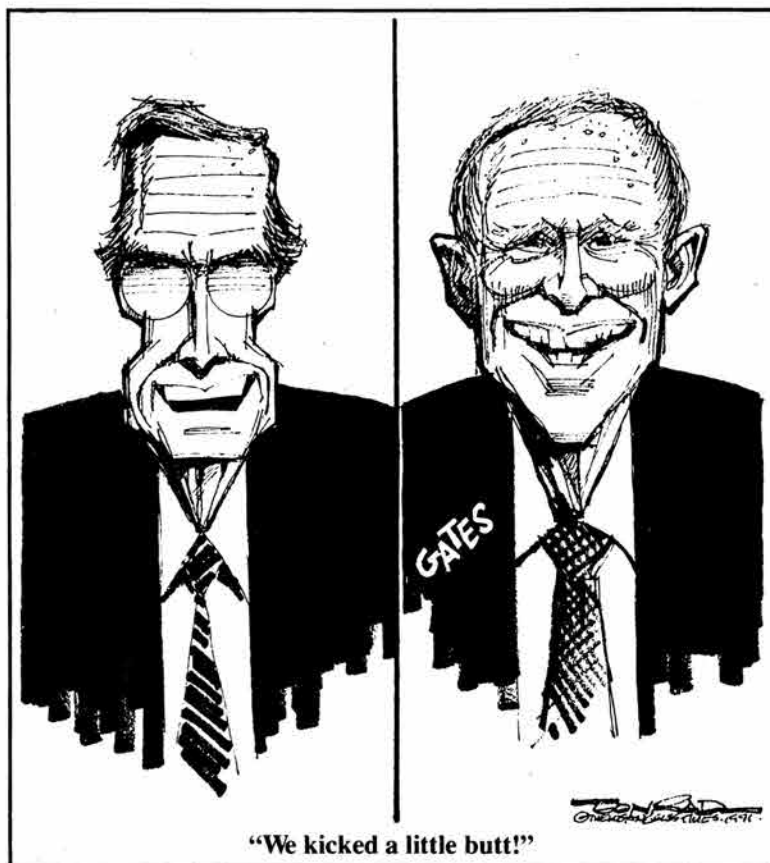
Needs information

I am a 34-year-old African male who is interested in becoming a socialist. However, there is a lack of information and no such organization exists within these confines. Any such information plus the socialist newspaper will be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your concern and anticipated cooperation.

A prisoner
Avenel, New Jersey

'Gaia hypothesis'

There is a development in the world of science which I would like to see discussed in the pages of the *Militant*, namely, the growing accep-



tance of the so-called "Gaia hypothesis" in popular ecological literature.

This "hypothesis," propounded by English scientist James Lovelock, conceives of the planet Earth as being itself a living being, regulating itself, for example, in the composition of gases and temperature of the atmosphere, as a living organism does.

My impression is that this idea restores the notion of God to the position in science from which it was dislodged by Darwin more than a hundred years ago.

A decade ago, many scientists and educators, including the *Militant*, took up the cudgels in defense of Darwinism, against the fraud of "scientific creationism." However, the "Gaia" affront to scientific thinking has been greeted quite differently. While some scientists have expressed their unease with the mysticism associated with it, others

appear to have embraced the idea as a metaphor for the interdependence of all forms of life on the planet.

James Robb
Auckland, New Zealand

Holds no punches

The *Militant* is one of the best-written papers I've seen. Holds no punches, and gets to the point. Unlike other papers, it's a guide in the real world.

A prisoner
Leesport, Pennsylvania

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Militant Prisoner Fund

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Correction

A copy-editing error appeared in the April 26 *Militant* in the article on "Report from Israel: Palestinians resist continued curfew, repression." The article reported that Ismai Nimr Eidebat was fined 1,000 shekels by Israeli authorities for transporting vegetables from Bethlehem to Ezaria on the West Bank. The U.S. currency equivalent for 1,000 shekels is \$449, not \$2,220 as was indicated in the article.

Internal cop report in Los Angeles describes beating of Rodney King

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

LOS ANGELES — Documents from the Los Angeles police Internal Affairs Division (IAD), reported in the April 17 *Los Angeles Times*, reveal further details of how the cops tried to cover up their savage beating of construction worker Rodney King last March 3.

Millions around the world have seen the videotape of the assault on King, who is a member of the Laborers International Union and is Black. The new revelations came as protests continue to demand the ouster of Police Chief Daryl Gates.

The IAD documents, based on cops' testimony about the attack, include a "Penalty Recommendation" section. It calls for firing four cops.

The report cites 11 instances of "misconduct" on the part of the police involved in beating King:

- Sgt. Stacey Koon did not stop the "inappropriate use of force" against King; did not initiate an investigation into a serious misconduct at the scene; and failed to "accurately depict the details of the incident on his Sergeant's Daily Report."
- Officer Laurence Powell struck King 45 times with his baton and then submitted an arrest report "which failed to accurately depict the details of the incident." Powell is also charged with making racist comments via the police computer.
- Officer Timothy Wind kicked King five times and hit him 14 times with his baton. Wind also submitted a false arrest report.
- Officer Theodore Briseno kicked King once.

The IAD report proposed firing Koon, Powell, Wind, and Briseno. All four have also been indicted on felony charges. The internal cop documents report that the four — who have refused to discuss the case publicly — defended their actions during the investigation and claimed the use of force was "appropriate."

Koon, for instance, claimed the use of batons was "reasonable and necessary," according to the documents.

'Like hitting a tree'

The IAD report also cites the testimony of other witnesses. Ned and Eloise Camp saw the assault on King from their balcony. King did not stagger or appear intoxicated, said Ned Camp, and was standing when two cops suddenly started "whacking on him."

"Camp witnessed King being struck with batons on the head, back, stomach, and all over," including his legs 30 times or more times," the IAD report said. Camp said the sound of batons striking King was "like hitting a tree."

Some of the cops most directly involved were "unavailable" to be interviewed about some IAD allegations. Powell and Wind, for example, could not be interviewed about the racist language used on the police computer because they have been under medical care "since the [computer] transmissions were discovered," the report said.

The report recommends that Gates order Koon, Powell, and Briseno to attend a Board of Rights hearing, which is an administrative trial. Such hearings are public and attendance by the cops charged is mandatory. (Wind is ineligible for the hearing because he is a probationary cop. The IAD recommends firing him outright).

The day the *Times* made the report public, Gates responded: "There's no recommendation to fire the officers."

"Unlike others," Gates said, "we allow the officers to have a hearing before we hang them. We do go through due process." Gates has the sole power in the police department to punish the cops.

Earlier in the week, Gates levied criticism at the *Times* for its coverage of the police. At an April 14 rally of 300 sponsored by Citizens in Support of the Chief of Police, Gates

charged, "They're tearing down this city." The *Times*, Gates said, "should be telling the world what a great city this is and what a great police department this is."

Court hearing on Gates

The Coalition for Justice and an End to Police Brutality has issued a call to "pack the courtroom" April 25 when a Superior Court judge will hear arguments on whether Gates should stay on the job.

On April 4 the Police Commission had placed the chief on a 60-day paid leave of absence. Gates said he would file a lawsuit. The next day the Los Angeles City Council instructed the city attorney to settle Gates' suit by placing him back on the job.

Superior Court Judge Ronald Sohigian issued a temporary restraining order April 8 barring the Police Commission from placing Gates on leave. The April 25 court date is to hear Gates' lawsuit against the Police Commission.

The state Court of Appeals has denied two petitions — one filed by the Police Commission and one by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference — seeking the overturn of Sohigian's restraining order.

A campaign to petition for recall of Gates was announced April 20. While he is not an elected official, the city charter allows for a recall election.

"It is clear Chief Gates has no intention of resigning," the petition reads. "We, the undersigned, demand that the Los Angeles City Council hold a recall election of Police Chief Daryl Gates."

"We have a real opportunity to get rid of the man," said petition organizer Kerman Maddox, an instructor at Los Angeles Southwest Community College.

In other developments, one of the cops who beat King was named in a lawsuit against brutality filed by Salvador Castaneda, a Salvadoran garment worker. Castaneda required surgery and was hospitalized for more than a week after Powell fractured his elbow with a baton. Although the incident happened some time ago, the city attorney originally would not release Powell's name to Castaneda's attorney. It was only recently that the attorney discovered Powell was the same cop who assaulted King.

On April 17 the Los Angeles Police Protective League's board of directors voted unanimously against backing a recall campaign to force Mayor Thomas Bradley out of office because he had called on Gates to resign. League President George Aliano had threatened the cops would join a recall effort.

"We decided not to take any action whatsoever to disrupt the functions of the Police Commission and the city council," board member Sgt. Frank Grimes explained. "We are removing ourselves from the political arena entirely."

"A recall effort would polarize the community and officers alike," said Cliff Ruff, director of the league.

Protest messages demanding that Gates be removed may be sent to Mayor Thomas Bradley and city council president John Ferraro at: 200 N. Spring St., Los Angeles, CA 90012.



Militant/Lisa Ahlberg
April 6 anti-police-brutality protest demanding ouster of top cop Gates.

West Virginia Steelworkers build for solidarity rally set for April 28

BY MARY NELL BOCKMAN

RAVENSWOOD, West Virginia — Steelworkers on the picket lines at Ravenswood Aluminum Corp. (RAC) are firming up plans for a solidarity rally April 28.

Dozens of members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 5668 have fanned out in the region and to Minnesota, Connecticut, and New York. At every stop, workers are urged to come to Ravenswood for the rally.

The 1,700 Steelworkers at RAC were locked out of the plant on Nov. 1, 1990, after rejecting a concession contract. The company then hired 900 scabs, declaring them permanent replacements. A meeting between the union and company in March produced no new offer by management. Another meeting is scheduled for April 24.

Called by the West Virginia AFL-CIO, USWA District 23 and Local 5668, the solidarity rally will take place Sunday, April 28, at 1:00 p.m. at the Jackson County Junior Farm Fairgrounds near Ravenswood. Speakers will include Lynn Williams, international president of the USWA, and Richard Trumka, president of the United Mine Workers of America.

A delegation of 25 officials from District 17 of the UMWA pledged their support during an April 1 visit to the union hall. The Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers local at Elkem Metals in Alloy, West Virginia, voted to organize members to participate, as have USWA locals in Huntington and Wheeling, West Virginia, and Ashland, Kentucky.

RAC took out ads in area newspapers recently, claiming the plant is operating under "normal conditions."

Don Worlledge, president of RAC, declared, "Management has been able to institute new, highly efficient policies and procedures that have combined with the eagerness

and cooperation of the permanent replacement workers to create a new spirit of productivity in the plant."

Dan Stidham, president of Local 5668, responded to RAC in an open letter. Explaining the concessions the company demanded, he said, "RAC's final offer only amounted to an increase of 27 cents the first year, 14 cents the second year and an 8-cent decrease in the third year. They want us to trade a metal price bonus, which we averaged earning \$1.57 per hour over our last contract agreement, for the company's 'pig in a poke' profit-sharing plan."

Other union issues include retirement benefits, safety, and elimination of mandatory overtime. Five workers were killed in the plant in 1990-91, including one who died from heat stress while working a forced 16-hour shift.

Strikers and supporters have continued to mobilize. Rallies have been held at the Ravenswood union hall, the local high school, and in Charleston, where 6,000 unionists gathered in late December. Car caravans called "rolling roadblocks" made daily drives past the plant. Hundreds of cars made the slow-moving five-mile circuit at shift changes.

On March 14 Judge Fred Fox banned the drive-bys and closed the public highway leading to the plant. Two days later hundreds of cars turned out for another caravan.

On March 26 the National Labor Relations Board, after filing a complaint against the union, and RAC management won another injunction against the union. U.S. District Judge Charles Haden authorized federal law enforcement agents to "take all actions deemed necessary" to stop the massive car caravans and alleged harassment of scabs. Trials for 500 supporters cited during the drive-bys will begin shortly.

The company has also filed a federal lawsuit against Local 5668, accusing the local and 47 named defendants of orchestrating violence against the company. Jim Bowen, USWA District 23 director, called the lawsuit a "public relations ploy."

"It's a smoke screen, a common tactic used by union-busting companies," Bowen said. "Eastern Airlines and the New York *Daily News* tried the same thing. It didn't work there and it won't work here."

Steelworkers won unemployment compensation by proving that RAC had locked them out. The state announced that benefits for West Virginia workers would be extended 13 weeks due to high unemployment.

Union members returning from trips to Minnesota and Connecticut report much interest and support for their fight. Billy Hendricks, a 19-year potroom worker at RAC, went with a group of 40 to Stamford, Connecticut, where two of the three owners of the plant live.

"Overall, the people we met were really receptive to us," Hendricks said. "We passed out handbills at the commuter rail stations and in the neighborhoods where the owners live."

RAC workers, invited by USWA District 33, spent a week in Minnesota. Jerry Schoonover said they spoke to machinists at Northwest Airlines, autoworkers at a Ford plant, railworkers in St. Paul, and at a union rally of 250 at the state capitol demanding passage of an anti-scab bill.

A local delegation participated in the April 1 Miner's Day parade and rally in southwest Pennsylvania sponsored by UMWA Districts 4 and 5.

For more information on the April 28 rally and other solidarity activities, call the union at (304) 273-9319 or write to USWA Local 5668, Box 56, Ravenswood, WV 26161. The union has established a Lockout Hotline with recorded updates at (800) 842-8667.